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**THE STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS:  
A CASE STUDY  
OF A NON PROFIT ORGANIZATION**

**BY  
STACY RESLER TOBIN**

**A RESEARCH PROJECT SUBMITTED IN  
PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR  
THE DEGREE OF  
MASTER OF COMMUNITY PLANNING**

**UNIVERSITY OF RHODE ISLAND**

**1995**

MASTER OF COMMUNITY PLANNING  
RESEARCH PROJECT  
OF  
STACY RESLER TOBIN

Dr Marcia Menden Feld

Approved: Major Professor Dr. Marcia Feld

Dr Marcia Menden Feld

Acknowledged: Director Dr. Marcia Feld

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## **Introduction**

This research project will be a case study of the strategic planning process. More specifically, the project will "pattern match" (Yin, 1989) the actual strategic planning process of a non-profit organization, Seniors Helping Others, with the theoretical framework outlined by Backoff and Nutt in *A Process for Strategic Management with Specific Application for the Nonprofit Organization* (1988).

The project will be presented in the following chapters:

### Chapter 1 - Literature Review

This chapter will describe the existing literature on the strategic planning process, beginning with the definitions of strategic planning and proceeding to the future of this technique. The chapter concludes with a formulation of this project and how the project is justified in the context of the current literature.

### Chapter 2 - Theoretical Framework

This chapter will focus on a theoretical framework of strategic planning that is used to assess this project. Most of this chapter will be a detailed description of each step of the selected model, as well as a discussion on some of the planning techniques used in the process. In addition there will be a brief explanation of why this model was selected rather than other strategic planning models outlined previously in Chapter 1.

### Chapter 3 - Case Example

This chapter will examine the strategic planning process as experienced by the case-study, a non-profit organization. The chapter will begin with a description of the case-study, a non-profit organization; its mission, goals and objectives; its clients; and its programs. The

organizations rationale for undertaking the strategic planning process will next be discussed. Last, this chapter will detail the process that the organization undertook beginning with the decision to formulate a strategic plan through the completion of the process.

#### Chapter 4 - Findings and Conclusions

This chapter will combine the findings of the case study example with the theoretical framework outlined by Backoff and Nutt (1988) and discussed in Chapter 2. The purpose of this is to assess how well the actual events fit the selected strategic planning model. The comparison between the case study example and the theoretical framework will be accomplished by employing a technique called pattern matching. The first part of this chapter will attempt to match Senior Helping Other's (SHO) process against the selected theoretical framework specifically looking for areas where SHO did not follow the model. The next section will address the issues that SHO encountered during the process that were not provided for in the model. Finally, conclusion will be drawn and suggestions will be given based on the above findings.



## **Chapter 1**

### **Literature Review**

#### **Introduction**

This chapter will describe the current literature on the strategic planning process. First, definitions and the history of strategic planning will be discussed. Second, the importance of strategic planning will be addressed. Third, a listing of popular strategic planning models and the commonalities and differences between these models will be presented. Fourth, a discussion with regard to the use of strategic planning by nonprofit organizations. Fifth, a consideration of the role planners can have in strategic planning and the implications it may have on the profession will be discussed. Sixth, the future of strategic planning will be considered. This chapter concludes with a formulation of this present project and how this project is justified in the context of the current literature.

#### **What is Strategic Planning**

The 1992 version of Webster's Dictionary does not provide a definition for strategic planning. It does, however, define strategy as "the art of devising or employing plans or stratagem toward a goal". Although not in Webster's Dictionary, numerous definitions of strategic planning do exist, within business and academic literature.

Strategic planning is a process by which an organization envisions its future and develops the procedures and applications to achieve that end (Goodstein, Pfeiffer and Nolan, 1986). The term strategic is applied to planning activities that link a goal-setting process and a formulation of immediate objectives to move the organization toward the stated goals as well as the selection of specific actions required to achieve the objectives (Steiss, 1985).

Bryson (1988) expands on this definition when he defines strategic planning as a disciplined effort to produce fundamental decisions and actions that shape and guide what an organization is, what it does, and why it does what it does (Bryson, 1988, Bryson and Einsweiler, 1988a). When the strategic planning process works, it helps an organization create its future (Goodstein, Pfeiffer and Nolan, 1986).

Strategic planning can also be considered a process of exploration. Wilkinson (1985) describes strategic planning in terms of planning a trip. The questions that are addressed by this exploration include: where you need to go and when, whether you are prepared for the trip, what kind of trip it will probably be and whether there will be suitable rewards when you arrive. When it is done correctly, strategic planning is an integral ongoing function that drives the organization to do better (Wilkinson, 1985).

Kaufman (1991) describes strategic planning as planning in the face of obstacles or competition. This writer views strategic planning as a method for creating improved organizational payoffs and consequences in the face of competition, obstacles or adversity.

Anthony (1985) defines strategic planning with five key elements. These elements are:

1. A recognition of the outside environment and an incorporation of these relevant elements into the planning process.
2. A long-term focus, often three to five years, but can be as many as ten to twenty.
3. A process conducted by the top executives of an organization.
4. Involvement in decision making that commits large amounts of organizational resources to the process.
5. A creation of a direction for an organization by focusing on the organization's identity and its role in a changing environment.

Strategic planning is often confused with traditional long range planning, but there are distinct differences between the two. There are four key points that differentiate strategic planning from traditional planning. Strategic planning places emphasis on:

1. action
2. consideration of a broad and diverse set of stakeholders
3. attention to external opportunities and threats and internal strengths and weaknesses
4. attention to actual or potential competitors (Bryson and Roering, 1987).

Integral to its definition, strategic planning is a continuous process performed in annual cycles and coupled with continuing involvement of management personnel and other participants in different phases of the process (Steiss, 1985:88).

### **The History of Strategic Planning**

Strategic planning is the latest step in the evolutionary process of finding better ways for an organization to manage itself in times of turbulent environmental change (Wilkinson, 1985).

Although strategic planning is generally applied in businesses it actually began in the context of warfare. The verb form of strategy meant "to plan the destruction of one's enemies through the effective use of resources" (Pfeiffer, 1986). The vast resources and technology required by warfare made strategic planning a necessity and led to its creation (Pfeiffer, 1986).

In the 1800's, the use of strategic planning increased due to two factors. First, the required implementation of large scale warfare such as weapons and personnel, were dependent on planning. Secondly, the increased use of an organizational structure that formalized the use

of specialists, including planners, required some type of strategic planning to make this structure effective (Pfeiffer, 1986).

The Franco-Prussian war and the U.S. Civil War marked a turning point in strategic planning. It was at this time that formal long range planning was adopted by complex organizations. Strategic planning became a crucial part of the management process first for the military, then in government, followed by business and finally in nonprofit organizations (Pfeiffer, 1986).

The year 1890, with the closing of the frontier, saw another crucial turning point in the evolution of strategic planning. According to management historians, 1890 can be considered the key division point between the operation of businesses by owner-managers and operation of businesses by professional managers. This change accelerated the development of administrative management techniques, including strategic planning (Pfeiffer, 1986).

From 1890 until the mid-1930's, businesses had a production orientation. The focus was on how to make the product more efficiently. The planning that was employed during this period used budgeting and financial control. Hax and Majluf (1984) consider this to be the first stage in the evolution of modern strategic planning. During the 1920's, the practice of forecasting economic conditions and procedures for appropriating capital expenditures became part of business planning (Judson, 1990).

The second stage in the evolution of modern strategic planning occurred from the 1930's through the mid 1950's. This stage was marked by a operations-management orientation with long-range planning as the accepted planning tool. The move toward long-range planning occurred when the short-run production orientation of earlier stages began to lose

its effectiveness. As businesses began to expand, many internationally, planning beyond one year became a necessity (Pfeiffer, 1986).

The concept of strategic planning, for the private business sector, began in the late 1950's early 1960's (Steiss, 1985). Businesses during this time had a marketing orientation, and they began to employ business strategic planning. Businesses began to realize that they could no longer extrapolate their future, and instead would need to create their future by identifying strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. They would need to plan a strategy for use in their own corporate warfare (Pfeiffer, 1986).

An early example of strategic planning in the private sector can be traced to Ford Motor Company and the Kennedy administration. When the president of Ford, Robert S. McNamara, left Ford to become Secretary of Defense, he took with him a method of multi-year planning which helped him gain perspective on key military strategic decisions. His effectiveness was widely discussed throughout the media and business circles and led to the acceptance and advancement of the strategic planning process. As a result, many large organizations began to undertake their own strategic planning efforts (Steiss, 1985).

In addition to McNamara as a role model, the economic conditions of the country also supported the need for strategic planning. The 1960's were characterized by steady economic growth and prosperity and, as a result, large businesses began to diversify further into the international market. Such moves toward diversity added to the complexity of the large corporations and therefore new management methods and technologies were desperately needed. Strategic planning proved to be the answer to the business managers' prayers (Steiss, 1985).

The concept of strategic planning entered the public arena almost a decade later. It began to surface in government in the late 1960's and early 1970's. Initially, strategic planning was a response to the criticism leveled on comprehensive planning. Until this point comprehensive planning was advocated in government for three decades (Steiss, 1985).

The public sector's early attempts at strategic planning were not successful. Although these agencies went through the procedural motions and used the correct jargon, little change in their organizations occurred. One explanation for this failure was the top-down model approach that was employed. This approach was often poorly coordinated and contradictory (Steiss, 1985).

Judson (1990) has created a timeline for the evolution of modern business strategic planning. This timeline is depicted below.

1850-1910	Stage 1	Little Planning
1910-1955	Stage 2	Budget Planning
1955-1970	Stage 3	Decentralized Planning
		Long Range Business Planning
1970-1985	Stage 4	Strategic Planning
1985-Present	Stage 5	Strategic Management

At this time, it is important to clarify the terms strategic planning and strategic management. Judson (1990) states that strategic planning is an aspect of strategic management and that the two are not separate activities but parts of a continuum. Strategic planning is done before the final results are known. Strategic management occurs at the end of strategic planning. Since strategic planning and strategic management are part of a continuum, and closely related to each other, both terms will be used interchangeably in this paper.

## **Importance of Strategic Planning**

It often appears impossible to plan when the environment is constantly changing, however Anthony (1985) stresses the importance of strategic planning during these changes. When an organization operates in a turbulent environment, it needs strategic planning and the time when it appears most difficult to plan is the time when it is most needed. If every day was like the day before there would be no reason to plan for the future.

Strategic planning serves numerous purposes for an organization. First, strategic planning serves as the ultimate basis for all that an organization does. Second, strategic planning provides the criteria for major investment decisions. Lastly, strategic planning serves as the basis to evaluate the performance of the organization and its managers (Anthony, 1985). Strategic planning, when done correctly, should provide the organization with its core priorities and a set of guidelines for day-to-day managerial decisions (Goodstein, Pfeiffer and Nolan, 1986).

Holloway (1986) suggests that the value of strategic planning is that it both simulates and stimulates. The strategic planning process simulates in that it permits one to envision the future on paper. Such a process encourages creation and evaluation of a number of different options. Strategic planning also stimulates an organization. The strategic planning process provides a framework for decision making throughout the organization and acts as a valuable communication device.

Finally, Steiss (1985) stresses the importance of a linkage between strategic planning and management planning. Without strategic planning, management planning can be disjointed

and counterproductive. Likewise, without management planning, strategic planning could be little more than good intentions without the means for realization.

### **Some Popular Strategic Planning Models**

This section will highlight some of the more popular strategic planning models employed today. A more detailed description of the strategic planning model analyzed in this paper will be addressed in Chapter 2.

There appear to be many popular strategic planning models. In fact there are at least 15 different strategic planning models available and readily used (Kaufman, 1991:60). Some of these models are highlighted below.

Holloway (1986) suggests a basic strategic planning program consisting of eight steps.

1. Establish the mission.
2. Select objectives.
3. Set goals.
4. Analyze strengths and weaknesses.
5. Study threats and opportunities.
6. Prepare planning documents.
7. Ensure implementability.
8. Review process.

Wilkinson (1985) states that classic strategic planning is comprised of six building blocks.

The six building blocks are as follows:

1. The analysis of the external environment - focusing on threats and opportunities.
2. The analysis of the internal environment - focusing on strengths and weaknesses.



3. Direction setting - focusing on the operation's mission, goals and objectives.
4. The definition and selection of base and contingency plans - focusing on the identification of alternatives.
5. Implementation.
6. Performance evaluation.

Anthony (1985) proposes a slightly different strategic planning model. His model is comprised of the following eight elements:

1. Environmental analysis.
2. Environmental forecast.
3. Customer/Market analysis.
4. Strategic planning premises.
5. Internal assessment.
6. Mission development.
7. Strategic thrusts.
8. Plan operationalizing.

Steiss (1985) advocates yet another strategic planning model. This model is comprised of five basic steps.

1. Basic research and analysis.
2. Diagnosis of trends and needs.
3. Statements of goals and objectives.
4. Formulation and analysis of alternatives.
5. Policy alternatives and resource recommendations.

Kaufman (1991) outlines 12 essential steps to strategic planning. These steps are organized under three broader categories.

#### A. Data Collection

1. Identification of beliefs and values.
2. Identification of visions.
3. Identification of current missions.
4. Identification of needs.

#### B. Planning

5. Identification of matches and mismatches: integrate visions, beliefs, values, needs, and current missions.
6. Reconciliation of differences.
7. Selection of a preferred future.
8. Identification of missions.
9. Identification of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOTs).
10. Derivation of decision rules.
11. Development of strategic action plans.

#### C. Implementation

12. Putting the strategic plan to work.

Harman and McClure (1985) use a five step approach for strategic planning.

1. Analysis of the environment.
2. Identification of strategies.
3. Planning activities.
4. Formulation of objectives.
5. Development of goals.

The above models were all designed for use in the business context. The following model, and the model detailed in the next chapter, were designed specifically for use by nonprofit organizations.

Bryson (1988) outlined an eight step approach specifically for the nonprofit organization.

1. Initiation of and agreement on a strategic planning process.
2. Identification of organizational mandates.
3. Clarification of organizational mission and values.
4. Assessment of the external environment: opportunities and threats.
5. Assessment of the internal environment: strengths and weaknesses.
6. Identification of the strategic issues facing an organization.
7. Formulation of strategies to manage the issues.
8. Establishment of an effective organizational vision for the future.

Goodstein, Pfeiffer, and Nolan (1986) suggest that the entire strategic planning process should take between six to nine months. They recommend a retreat-type setting for planning stating that this environment is conducive for envisioning and confrontation that are necessary for the strategic planning process.

Although the different models attempt to guide the organization through the process, certain problems often arise. Wilkinson (1986) lists ten common pitfalls that organizations sometime encounter.

1. Shelving the plan once it is completed.
2. Failure to agree on the organization's objectives and strategies.
3. Failure to build on "ownership" of the plan within the organization.
4. The tendency to be overly optimistic about goals and the ability to achieve them.
5. Failure to plan for contingencies.
6. Allowing the plan to become outdated.

7. The tendency to underestimate the time and the commitment required to make the planning process work.
8. The lack of commitment to the planning process by top professionals and volunteers.
9. Failure to integrate the strategic plans with the day-to-day operations.
10. Failure to define measurable goals for success.

### **The Differences and Commonalities of the Various Models**

While each of the strategic planning models has its unique characteristics, there are some commonalities that all the approaches share.

All but the Steiss model discuss analyzing the environment; both internal and external. Most of the models go further by recommending that the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats facing the organization be examined. This step/steps appears to be one of the major foundations of strategic planning.

Perhaps the biggest difference of the models is the sequential order of steps. Each model seems to place the steps in a different arrangement. An example is the ordering of the mission statement. Holloway (1986) places the mission statement as step number 1, whereas Anthony's (1985) model places it at number 6 and Wilkinson (1985) at number 3. While the ordering of the steps may not be of great importance, the fact that numerous models exist is crucial. It is important that an organization find the model best suited for their situation, context and needs.

## **The Use of Strategic Planning by Nonprofit Organizations**

The use of strategic planning has only recently entered the nonprofit sector and opinions on its success have been mixed. Nonprofit organizations have different makeups and needs than for-profit companies, and hence often have different expectations from strategic planning process.

There are numerous strategic planning models to choose from; however, not all the models are equally applicable to nonprofit organizations. Therefore, it is important that the planning committee of a nonprofit organization be careful in its choice of an appropriate strategic planning model (Bryson and Einsweiler, 1987).

Strategic planning has been slow to be implemented in the nonprofit environment. Pekar (1982) cites four possible reasons:

1. In the early stages of development, the nonprofit organization is single-goal oriented which results in little emphasis or need for strategic planning.
2. Unlike industry, a strong common thread is found in most associations.
3. Some functions are often performed by part-time or volunteer personnel with lower or no salaries.
4. It is difficult for nonprofit staff to take initiative for planning if the organization is dependent on members, volunteers, and a board for funding.

Certain conditions make the success of strategic planning for nonprofit organizations more likely. For instance, Bryson and Einsweiler (1988a) state that strategic planning can best be applied to nonprofit organizations that provide public services because they are closest to businesses.

Espy (1986) stresses the importance of including members of the board as part of the planning committee. Since the board will ultimately be involved in the implementation of the strategic plan, it is a good idea to have their input throughout the process. It is also more likely that the plan will be successful when more people feel invested in it.

Bryson and Einsweiler (1988a) also stress the importance of citizen participation in the nonprofit strategic planning process. Active participation educates and empowers citizens and, at the same time, commits them and makes them responsible for the program.

Bryson and Einsweiler (1988a) suggest seven criteria necessary for an organization to succeed in a strategic plan. Their seven criteria are:

1. The inclusion of at least one sponsor, a stakeholder, in a position of power and authority to legitimize the strategic planning process.
2. At least one champion to push the strategic planning process along.
3. A strategic planning team.
4. An expectation of disruptions and delays.
5. A flexible attitude toward what constitutes a strategic plan.
6. An ability to pull information and people together at key points for important discussions and decisions.
7. A willingness to construct and consider arguments geared to very different evaluative criteria.

A case study by Barry (1988) of strategic planning in a nonprofit organization offered numerous lessons. First, the strategic planning process needs to be tailored to fit the organization. Second, a leader is the key to success. Often, an outside consultant is useful in keeping the process efficient and on track. Third, since strategic planning is a way of thinking, the written plan will never be perfect or complete. This needs to be

acknowledged by the strategic planning committee. Finally, strategic planning can be used as a tool for assisting in a major transition (Barry, 1988).

It is important to remember that to have successful strategic planning in the nonprofit sector, one must carefully tailor the process to the unique circumstances of each organization (Eadie, 1983).

Finally, certain aspects of the strategic planning practice can be institutionalized by public and nonprofit organizations. The following elements of the process can be a permanent part of organizational life.

1. A formal or informal cabinet of key decision makers.
2. Missions statements.
3. Policy objectives that emerge from the sense of purpose embodied in the mission, or from a review of past decisions and the mandates the organization faces.
4. Periodic situation analyses.
5. Periodic strategic issue or problem identification exercises.
6. Strategic issue management practices.
7. More formal multicriteria proposal-evaluation procedures. (Bryson and Einsweiler, 1988b).

Harman and McClure (1985) cite three characteristics of an organization that would put strategic planning to its best use. The first is a strong commitment to planning. Second, a favorable orientation to change or innovations, and third, an effective management information system.

## **Implications for Planners and the Planners' Role**

Since the majority of planners work in either the public or nonprofit sectors of the economy, the issue of applying strategic planning in these sectors is a significant one.

The American Planning Association has recognized this significance by devoting both conference time and press to the subject of strategic planning. For example, the Winter 1987 Journal of the American Planning Association contained a series of articles on the subject. Additionally, the 1986 annual APA conference focused on this issue. Finally, the APA press published a book in 1988 entitled *Strategic Planning: Threats and Opportunities for Planners*.

Kaufman and Jacobs (1987) suggest that planners should view the popularity of strategic planning as an opportunity to revive an interest in planning and the planning profession.

Bryson and Einsweiler (1988b) cite a number of implications for planners and the strategic planning process. First, they suggest that the rise of strategic planning can expand the planner's domain and usefulness. Second, it can also expand the planner's agenda beyond the traditional agenda of comprehensive planning. Third, strategic planning can help planners and their organizations cope with the ever changing circumstances and environments. Finally, Bryson and Einsweiler (1988b) recommend that as a profession we embrace the strategic planning process because it will enhance the standing of the profession and will further public and nonprofit organizational purposes.

Nutt and Backoff (1987) see the role of the planner in the strategic planning process as a facilitator, teacher, politician and technician. They also remind planners to combine thinking about action with acting thoughtfully.



## **The Future of Strategic Planning**

It appears that strategic planning is likely to become as common for the nonprofit and public sectors as it is currently for the business sector.

Bryson and Einsweiler (1988b) believe that strategic planning is likely to become a necessary tool for every planner for a number of reasons. First, strategic planning helps decision makers in nonprofit and public sectors deal with the many challenges their organization encounters. Second, strategic planning can help decision makers deal with the increasingly turbulent environments in which their organizations operate. Lastly, strategic planning provides insights and methods for the management of complexity and change in situations where the decision maker is held accountable.

While strategic planning is becoming an increasing popular exercise for nonprofit organizations, Bryson and Einsweiler (1988b) caution planners to be careful about their engagement in the strategic planning process. Not all strategic planning approaches are equally useful and certain conditions govern the success of each approach. Careful consideration by the planner on the choice of strategic planning models is crucial.

Bryson and Einsweiler (1988b) state nine areas that need to be addressed to further the practice of strategic planning for public and nonprofit organizations. The nine areas are as follows:

1. Public and nonprofit organizations need more experience with and knowledge of strategic planning.

2. Most approaches to strategic planning are non contingent in that they do not specify clearly the boundary conditions of the model or how each should be applied in specific circumstances.
3. The relationship among strategic issues, goals, and scenarios need to be explored in greater detail.
4. Questions remain about how to formulate specific strategies for dealing with strategic issues once they have been identified or formulated.
5. Most models of strategic planning are not formally or explicitly political.
6. Additional work is needed on how to deal with plural, ambiguous, and often conflicting goals and objectives in the public sector.
7. Most models of strategic planning are not clear on how to link tools and process.
8. The appropriate unit of analysis or application is unclear for many of the models.
9. More work needs to be done on how to relate strategic planning to other kinds of planning.

Bryson (1988) states that additional research is necessary to advance the knowledge and practice of strategic planning in the nonprofit world. More specifically, strategic planning models that are responsive to different situations in the nonprofit sector need to be developed and tested. Certain factors are inherent to nonprofit organizations and must be considered in the strategic planning process. These factors include: the political nature in which nonprofit organizations operate, the ambiguous or conflicting goals and objectives of nonprofit organizations, and handling competition or collaboration among nonprofit organizations.

## **This Project**

The strategic planning process has been around for centuries. First practiced as part of warfare and then as a business practice, it has only recently begun to be utilized in the nonprofit world.

As previously stated, numerous strategic planning models exist yet most are tailored to fit business needs. Applying these models to nonprofit organizations have led to mixed reviews. These models often ignore important aspects of nonprofit organizations. Two models designed specifically for nonprofit organizations do exist. The Backoff and Nutt model, detailed in the next chapter is one such model. This model will be used as a framework for the case study.

How well does the Backoff and Nutt model work in a real world situation? Does it provide the necessary guidance and framework to create a successful strategic plan? This paper will present a case study of a strategic planning process and interpret the case study in terms of the Backoff and Nutt model. Strengths and weaknesses of the model will be discussed as well as general implications of strategic planning within nonprofit organizations.

## **Chapter 2**

### **Theoretical Framework**

#### **Introduction**

This chapter describes the theoretical framework of strategic planning that is used for this project. The selected planning model that will be used for this project is called the Strategic Management Process and is outlined by Backoff and Nutt in their article "A Process for Strategic Management with Specific Application for Nonprofit Organization" in *Strategic Planning: Threats and Opportunities for Planners* (1988). The majority of this chapter will be a detailed description of what each step of the model entails, as well as a discussion on some of the planning techniques used in the process. In addition there will be a brief explanation of why this model was selected instead of other strategic planning models outlined previously in Chapter 1.

#### **Explanation of Model Choice**

The Backoff and Nutt (1988) model was selected instead of other strategic planning models because it was designed specifically for the needs of non-profit organizations. As discussed earlier, nonprofit organizations have different needs than for-profit businesses. Two of the more important differences between for-profit and nonprofit organizations are goals and operating environments. Nonprofit organizations often have numerous goals compared to the for-profits goal of increasing profits. Also nonprofit organizations must consider the political environment in which they operate. These differences may make traditional strategic planning difficult to apply for nonprofit organizations. The Backoff and Nutt (1988) model specifically addresses issues relevant to nonprofit organizations.

The model was also chosen rather than the Bryson (1988) model for nonprofit organizations because the Backoff and Nutt (1988) model was specifically tailored for planners. This model appeared in a planning publication and utilizes techniques that are familiar to planners.

### **Introduction to the Selected Model**

Backoff and Nutt's (1988) Strategic Management Process is divided into six stages. These stages, in order of process, are historical context, situational assessment, strategic issue agenda, strategic options, feasibility assessment, and implementation. Each of these stages will be subsequently detailed in this chapter.

Within each of the six stages of the model, there are three steps. The first step is "search". In this step, a search for information and ideas is conducted. In the second step, called "synthesis", generalizations, patterns and/or themes are recognized from the list of information and ideas. The third and final step, known as "selection", involves applying criteria to determine priorities for action. This last step enables the process to move from one stage to the next. Various planning techniques are used for each of these steps. These techniques will be discussed later in the chapter.

Backoff and Nutt (1988) recommend that the strategic process be approached by a "strategic management group". This group should include the chief executive officer and senior staff. Also included can be board members and strong stakeholders. In total, the strategic management group should be composed of five to 15 members (Backoff and Nutt, 1988:122). Outside consultants are also occasionally used to help organize the process.

## **Necessary Planning Techniques**

As previously mentioned, the search, synthesis and selection steps in the Backoff and Nutt (1988) strategic planning process require specific planning techniques. These techniques will be detailed below under each of the steps.

### Search Step

Backoff and Nutt (1988) recommend five techniques, each will be discussed below. These techniques are all useful in uncovering ideas and exchanging views, and can be used singularly or in combination.

1. Interacting groups: Groups are structured with a face to face format and discussion is free flowing and open-ended. An agenda and a group leader are often used to keep the discussion focused. Brainstorming is an example of an interacting group. During this technique, it is important to separate idea generation from idea evaluation.
2. Survey approaches: This approach gathers individual information and does not usually provide for group discussion.
3. Focus groups: In this technique, outside experts and/or outside interested parties provide information to the strategic management group. These focus groups can be useful in information gathering and helping to focus on the most pertinent issues.
4. Dialectic groups: This approach entails a systematic examination of issues from several points of view. It involves a discussion of ideas that are based on different assumptions. One benefit of this technique is that it forces the group to consider a wide range of information.
5. Syntectics: This technique is used to promote creativity. Metaphors and analogies are used to stimulate the group to visualize new perspectives. This process can help to negate the influence of preconceived notions. For example, Velcro fasteners were identified using this technique (Backoff and Nutt, 1988:134).

### Synthesis Step

Backoff and Nutt (1988) recommend six techniques, and each will be discussed below. These techniques are useful for identifying patterns and themes from the mass of information gathered in the search step.

1. Snowball technique: This technique finds labels to identify the bundles of ideas. Basically the ideas identified in the previous step are grouped together under similar categories. Eventually, patterns emerge and the categories capture a synthesis of the original ideas.
2. Scenarios: This technique constructs frameworks to examine how various possibilities combine to produce certain outcomes.
3. Morphology: This technique creates many diverse options by defining all possible combinations of elements.
4. Tree structure: In this technique, a hierarchy with subdivisions is formed. The highest level identifies the problem to be solved, intermediate levels consider issues, and the tree terminates with a list of specific actions.
5. Interpretive structural modeling: This technique is used to describe relational properties, and can be used to determine the order in which issues should be addressed.
6. Policy capturing: This technique elicits values from key individuals by posing various strategic options or by examining past decisions and inferring the values that lie behind those decisions. This technique can be used to determine which components of a strategy are acceptable and which are not to key individuals.

### Selection Step

Backoff and Nutt (1988) recommend three planning techniques. These techniques will help the group to organize the decision making process and set priorities so that they can move onto the next stage of the model.

1. Estimate-Discuss-Estimate: This technique is useful in setting priorities by creating discussion by which issues are ranked and rated. After this, informal lobbying occurs and information is shared so that the issues continue to shift and priorities are set by the group.
2. Q-sort: This technique first looks for the most important items and then the least important ones, switching back and forth until all items have been categorized. This method is especially useful when dealing with large numbers of items.
3. Merit indexes: This technique sets priorities by using an established set of criteria and ranking the issues accordingly.

All these techniques can be applied within each of the six stages of the Backoff and Nutt (1988) strategic planning model, however circumstances will make certain techniques more applicable than others. The next section will discuss the six stages of the strategic management process.

### **Stages of the Strategic Management Process**

The following is the basis of the Strategic Management Process as described by Backoff and Nutt (1988) in their article "A Process for Strategic Management with Specific Application for the Nonprofit Organization" in *Strategic Planning: Threats and Opportunities for Planners*. It is important to remember that, during each of these stages, the group must go through the three steps that were discussed earlier: search, synthesis and selection.

#### **Stage One: Historical Context**

In this stage, the historical context of the organization is formulated by examining the trends, critical events, directions and ideals of the organization. It is important to retrace the direction of the organization as far back as possible. When examining past trends, the



strategic management group should be noting the changes the organization has gone through. To gather this historical information, interviews with familiar parties, surveys and other planning search techniques listed earlier in the chapter are helpful tools for this task.

After the group has restructured the past events of the organization, they need to create images for the future. Based on these past directions, the group should envision where they see or where they hope to see the organization moving in the next five years.

By the end of this stage, the group should have a clear understanding of the organization's past and an idealized vision of its future. This idealized vision will help move the group into the next stage of the strategic management process.

#### Stage Two: Situational Assessment

In this stage, the immediate situation of the organization is considered. To accomplish this task, the group must examine and rank the organization's current strengths and weaknesses as well as its future opportunities and threats. This process is often referred to as SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats).

Situational assessment is crucial because it forces the group to candidly confront crosscurrents in the pressures that the organization faces (Backoff and Nutt, 1988:124). Completing this and the first stage enables the group to identify the core issues that must be managed. Managing the issues is accomplished by moving into the third stage.

#### Stage Three: The Issue Agenda

Backoff and Nutt (1988) define an issue as a "difficulty or problem that has a significant influence on the way the organization functions or on its ability to achieve a desired future,

for which there is no agreed-on response" (1988:125). Issues provide the basis of this third stage of the strategic management process.

The authors recognize that nonprofit and other third sector organizations often have four to seven high priority issues, creating what they call an issue agenda. This agenda shifts periodically as new issues arise and old ones are solved or disappear. Therefore this agenda needs to be updated often.

As the result of the preceding two steps, the strategic management group is able to uncover the pertinent issues related to the nonprofit organization. The first part of this stage is to recognize these issues, discuss them and then rank them in order of importance. The remainder of this stage is focused on identifying substantive actions to manage these key issues.

It is during this stage that a key difference between traditional strategic planning and this strategic management process arises. Traditional strategic planning uses goals to orient the thinking process whereas this framework uses constructed history and ideals as targets to create an anticipated mind-set. This enables the strategic management group to develop issues that can be managed now as opposed to goals which are to be achieved in the future (Backoff and Nutt, 1988:126).

Backoff and Nutt (1988) state that this third stage will result in a network of relations not a linear movement toward pre-established goals. This tactic helps to curb one of the major problems that nonprofit organizations face when establishing a strategic plan, the problem of goal mania or attempting to strive for too many unrealistic goals.

#### Stage Four: Strategic Options

This stage focuses on creating strategies based on information gleaned from the third stage of the process. The strategic management group begins with identifying possible strategies for the issues starting with the most important issue.

At this time, according to Backoff and Nutt (1988) the list of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats identified in the second stage of this process are reviewed. The SWOT is reviewed with regard to each issue to determine which SWOTs are most relevant and if any other SWOTs have been uncovered.

To identify the strategic options, the individuals in the group are given sheets of paper with each issue and its relevant strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats listed next to it with the following instructions:

"Considering the ideals we have identified for our future, suggest concrete actions we could undertake to manage the issue described below so as to build on strengths, overcome weaknesses, exploit opportunities, and blunt threats. Try to find or invent actions that address all four aspects" (Backoff and Nutt, 1988:127).

After each participant has completed their list, they swap lists with other participants and add new ideas. These ideas form the basis for the strategies since a strategy is comprised of action ideas with a common theme.

Once numerous strategies are developed, the group evaluates them based on specified criteria. Evaluative criteria include cost, feasibility, acceptance and effectiveness. After applying these criteria, the strategic management group should be able to narrow the strategies down to one or two strategic options.

The group then enters the next stage, the feasibility assessment, with these remaining strategies.

#### Stage Five: Feasibility Assessment

Backoff and Nutt (1988) state that the feasibility assessment in the strategic management process differs from the feasibility assessment in traditional strategic planning. The authors cite a unique operating environment in nonprofit organizations as the reason for needing a different approach. In addition to considering the feasibility of providing services, the nonprofit must also look at the political, financial, and legal implications of a new strategy.

Backoff and Nutt's (1988) feasibility assessment differs from the traditional form in a couple of ways. First, it involves lengthy discussions of who will be affected by the new strategy and who can help to ensure a successful implementation. This activity is known as a stakeholder analysis. A stakeholder is someone who has an interest in the organization and someone who can effect the operation of the organization. Stakeholders are broken down into internal and external stakeholders and, due to time limitations, only high-priority stakeholder views are considered. High priority stakeholders are determined using a ranking system described in the next paragraph. Second, this approach assesses what resources are required to implement the strategy. In addition to financial resources, political, legal, managerial and professional resources are also assessed.

This stage begins by considering each stakeholder's view on each issue. Each stakeholder view is then ranked as to whether they strongly support, support, oppose, or strongly oppose the strategy. In addition to the stakeholder's view being ranked, the stakeholders' themselves are also ranked as to their importance to the organization. Finally, based on where stakeholders stand in the two rankings they are categorized into one of the following four categories: problematic, antagonistic, low priority, and advocates. For example, if a

stakeholder supports a given strategy and is also considered important to the agency, he/she would be classified as an advocate. A stakeholder who opposes a given strategy but is not that important would be classified as a problematic. The following displays the various characterizations.

PROBLEMATIC: oppose strategy/least important stakeholder

ANTAGONISTIC: oppose strategy/most important stakeholder

LOW PRIORITY: support strategy/least important stakeholder

ADVOCATES: support strategy/most important stakeholder

The second part of this assessment, the resource analysis, is conducted in a similar fashion. The process begins by listing the types of resources needed for a strategy and who would be available to supply these resources. Resources can be from both internal sources as well as from external sources. Once the resources are listed, the actions needed to gather these resources are ranked in a procedure similar to that of the stakeholder ranking.

Required resources for a strategy are assessed in terms of their critical importance and potential availability. The ranking creates four categories: essential scarcity (critical/low availability), core support (critical/high availability), auxiliary support (non critical/high availability) and irrelevant (non critical/low availability).

The ranking and categorizing of both the stakeholders and the resources enables the strategic management group to move to the final stage of the process: implementation.

#### Stage Six: Implementation

Backoff and Nutt (1988) consider implementation as a means to deal with the broad concerns raised by a change in strategy as opposed to the actual steps to execute a strategy.

Therefore, this stage addresses tactics that will help deal with issues in each of the four categories recognized in the preceding stage for stakeholders and resources.

Tactics include dealing with a variety of stakeholders. For instance, tactics may include education of those stakeholders in opposition of a given strategy and bargaining with those stakeholders who are most antagonistic. The authors also recommend directly approaching those stakeholders who may be considered neutral to try to persuade them to become advocates of a given strategy. The authors also suggest using the advocates to sell the strategy to those who are indifferent and to act as a balance in public forums against the antagonists.

This stage concludes by stating the need to recognize which stakeholders and resources are available to help with the strategy and which, after all efforts have been exhausted, are not. Depending on the amount of negative influences, it may be beneficial not to go ahead with the strategy.

Backoff and Nutt (1988) offer some additional advice for planners who are embarking on the strategic management process. The authors stress the importance of going through each of the three steps; search, synthesis and selection, for each of the six stages. They also suggest using a variety of planning techniques, discussed earlier, for each of the steps and stages instead of relying on a few familiar ones.

This theoretical framework will be applied in Chapter 4 to analyze the strategic planning process of the case example, Seniors Helping Others.

## **Chapter 3**

### **Case Example**

#### **Introduction**

This chapter is an examination of the strategic planning process as experienced by the case-study example, a non-profit organization. The chapter begins with a description of the case-study organization; including its mission, goals and objectives, its clients, and its programs. The organization's rationale for undertaking the strategic planning process will be discussed next. Finally, this chapter details the strategic planning process that the organization undertook beginning with its initial decision to formulate a strategic plan through the completion of the process.

#### **Methodology**

The data for this chapter, both the organization's background and the commentary on the strategic planning process, were gathered in numerous fashions. Data were obtained from interviews with the past executive director, the current executive director, and key Board members. In addition to the interviews, this author was present at the strategic planning meetings and was involved in the actual process as a member of the Planning and Operations committee. Further, organization documents were used for background information and notes and correspondence on the strategic plan were also considered.

#### **The Selected Case-Study Organization: Seniors Helping Others**

The case study organization selected for this project was Seniors Helping Others (SHO). SHO was selected as the case study for various reasons. I first became involved in this

organization during the spring of 1993 when I did a brief internship for my social change class. At that time I was impressed by the enthusiasm of the staff and the volunteers as well as by the necessary niche which the organization filled in the community. At the same time, members of the organization shared their frustrations in trying to begin the strategic planning process. The SHO Board and staff felt that a strategic plan would help them become more organized and better enable them to compete for grant funding. The fall following my spring internship, I was asked to sit on the Board of Directors of the organization. At this time the desire to create a strategic plan still existed but no actual progress had yet been made.

Prior to a discussion on the strategic planning process attempted by SHO, background information regarding the nature and organization at SHO will be presented. This information provides the context to give a clear understanding of the selected non-profit agency.

#### Founding Basis and Mission Statement

Seniors Helping Others is part of the national Retired Seniors Volunteer Program (RSVP). SHO originated in Washington County in July 1981 as a way of involving the senior citizens in the community. At that time, a needs assessment was done which determined that 31 percent of the seniors in Washington County would like to volunteer in the community. In its early phases, the SHO staff consisted of Vista volunteers and the organization itself operated out of a church basement. The first executive director was hired in 1983. Today, Seniors Helping Others employs one full time and two part time staff and is located in new office space in Independence Square in Kingston. The following is the organization's dual mission statement.



1. To encourage volunteerism in the elder population, by acting as a clearinghouse of volunteer activity, matching volunteers with the most appropriate placements, based on their time, skills and interests.

2. To provide programs to meet the special needs of the frail and elderly and/or disabled in order to improve their quality of life and help maintain their independence.

### Formal Organizational Structure

In the past, SHO consisted of two paid, full-time staff: an executive director and a director of volunteers. Recently (June 1994), the original executive director resigned to pursue other employment goals. At that time the current director of volunteers was promoted by the Board to become the new executive director. Also at that time, there were changes in the organizational framework. Instead of hiring a new director of volunteers, two part-time positions were created: an office assistant and a program coordinator. Volunteers and interns also work in the SHO office and are integral to the organization's functioning. These individuals do the bookkeeping, bulk mailings, answer phones and generally pitch in wherever they are needed. There is also a Board of Directors, and an Advisory Council.

The Board of Directors is comprised of approximately eighteen members of the community. There are a few senior representatives on the Board but the majority of the Board members are middle aged. The Board of Directors have different educational and professional backgrounds, ranging from professors from University of Rhode Island, social workers and nurses to executives from local business. Each Board member is elected for a three year term. The officers of the Board include a president, vice president, treasurer and secretary. Each Board member also serves on various sub-committees. Present sub-committees include nominating, planning and operations, development, finance and executive.

The Advisory Board is comprised of seniors involved in Seniors Helping Others. The purpose of this advisory council is to assist the Board in special projects and provide a voice for the all the senior volunteers.

An organizational chart and the organization's by-laws have been provided for a clearer understanding of the organization. See appendix 3-1 and 3-2 for these items.

#### Need for this program

Past research has indicated that elderly individuals who are active, both mentally and physically, have a better quality of life than those who are inactive (Fischer, Rapkin and Rappaport, 1991). Encouraging active participation in community programs like SHO provides many elderly people with a sense of purpose and worth because it makes them feel useful and connected to their community. In addition to helping the elderly, programs like SHO have another purpose. Many non profit organizations rely heavily on these elderly volunteers to fill in the gaps of the paid workers.

#### Funding Sources

SHO relies on major grants from the state of Rhode Island and the Department of Elderly Affairs in addition to smaller private grants. SHO also receives contributions from the United Way, municipalities, and its members. Lastly, it raises additional moneys through fundraising events. Fundraising has increased in importance over the past few years as government funding continues to decrease. A copy of the organization's current budget has been provided for reference. See appendix 3-3 for this budget.

### Goals of the Organization

The goals of Seniors Helping Others are listed below.

1. To serve the needs of Washington County and Jamestown and to develop a supply of available volunteer personnel for use by non-profit agencies and medical service providers.
2. To maximize the activity levels of older persons by promoting the continuation of their physical and mental well-being.
3. To develop and maintain support systems for older volunteers.
4. To increase public awareness of the importance of volunteerism in our community.

### Organization's Programs

The original intent of SHO was to place individuals in outside, non-profit organizations where they were needed. Over time, however, certain needs evolved regarding the elderly and additional specialized programs have been created. One example of this is the Telecare Program. In this program volunteers call elderly shut-ins to check on their well-being and remind them to take medication. Some of the programs are run and administered entirely by Seniors Helping Others. It is important to note that the organization is currently concerned that it is becoming too specialized with these new programs and is drifting away from its original mission. However, grant money is more readily available for direct service programs than other programs. This issue of creating more specialized programs to obtain more grants or remaining a general clearinghouse of senior volunteers is one of the fundamental policy issues that the Board will consider while they implement the strategic planning process. SHO's current programs are listed below.

1. The Friendly Visitor Program - companionship to homebound population.
2. Telecare - telephone calls to individuals who live alone to remind them to take medication, or check on their safety and well being.

3. The South County Stroke Club - provide support and education to stroke victims and their families.

4. The Special Needs Adult Swim Program - in conjunction with the YMCA, volunteers assist special needs individuals in the locker room and pool.

5. Seniors Helping Youngsters - volunteers work in local schools as tutors, speakers, mentors, and library assistants.

6. Meals on Wheels - volunteers provide nutritious noon-time meals to homebound individuals.

#### Evaluation Procedures Present

Every year a different aspect of the program is evaluated. These evaluations are conducted by an evaluation committee which is a subcommittee of the Advisory Council. Two years ago, an evaluation of the views of the program's volunteers was completed. Last year an evaluation of the stations where the volunteers work was conducted. This year other RSVP programs were surveyed to determine their funding sources. The evaluations are used to help the organization measure to what extent they are meeting their stated goals.

#### Linkage with Other Agencies

Seniors Helping Others is linked with many agencies throughout Washington County and Jamestown. Many of the other agencies are places where the volunteers work. These other agencies include the R.I. Blood Center, Narragansett Elementary School, Animal Rescue League of Southern R.I., South County Hospital, and Meals on Wheels. In addition to these organizations, Seniors Helping Others also works collaboratively with the Visiting Nurses Association. SHO, the Visiting Nurses Association and the YMCA work together to run the Special Needs Adult Swim Program. Finally, Seniors Helping Others is linked with the national RSVP program and the department of Elderly Affairs.

Linkage with other agencies will be essential in the future as grant opportunities increase for collaborative efforts. This is another fundamental area that will be addressed during the strategic planning process.

#### Client/Constituency

SHO clients are primarily the senior volunteers, although they recognize that they are also serving the nonprofit organizations of Washington County and Jamestown. However, Seniors Helping Others is first committed to serving the elderly volunteers. A good portion of the Executive Director's day is spent on the phone with the volunteers discussing their experiences with their volunteer work. The organization also gives parties and luncheons to recognize and thank the volunteers for their commitment.

#### Change Agent Role

This organization works to empower the elderly to remain active in society and to change society's view about the role of senior citizens. Since the elderly are a rapidly growing segment of our society, this is a very important challenge. Within the next few decades there will be many elderly individuals who will be retiring with "fifteen plus" years ahead of them (Duensing, 1988). Not only does this type of opportunity provide them with a role in the community but it also benefits the community.

The remainder of this chapter will focus on the strategic planning process that SHO experienced.

## **Seniors Helping Others Strategic Planning Process**

The following is an examination on Seniors Helping Others strategic planning process. This examination begins with SHO's initial decision to create a strategic plan and ends with the plan's present status. This information will be compared later in chapter 4 to the selected model discussed in chapter 2. At that time similarities, differences, and problems will be discussed.

### **Decision to Create a Strategic Plan**

Seniors Helping Others decided to embark on the strategic planning process early in 1992. Two main reasons contributed to this decision. First, SHO was expanding both in its volunteers and in its programs and the Executive Director and Board wanted to try to better plan for future years. Second, many grant applications requested proof of some sort of future planning before granting funds. SHO had developed to a point where if they wanted to compete with other nonprofit organizations for funding, they needed to be more clear on what the organization stood for and where it was headed.

### **Early Attempts at the Strategic Planning Process**

SHO applied for its first technical assistance grant from the Rhode Island Foundation in March of 1992. SHO requested approximately \$19,000 for staff time and to hire technical assistance for creating a strategic plan. This application was rejected in September 1992 on two grounds. First, the Rhode Island foundation felt that SHO had asked for too much money. Second, before SHO requested money for technical assistance, SHO needed to interview three candidates and select one for the job.

SHO complied with the Rhode Island foundation's request and interviewed three candidates for technical assistance. The selected candidate was Lynne McKinney, Ph.D..

He was chosen because of his experience and his long history with SHO. SHO also lowered their financial request from \$19,000 to approximately \$5000.

The second grant application for technical assistance in creating a strategic plan was sent to the Rhode Island Foundation in October 1993. This application was also rejected. The notice of rejection was received in February of 1994. The reason for the rejection was that the Rhode Island Foundation decided not to give out funding for technical assistance.

#### Formation of the Planning and Operations Committee

After the grant request for technical assistance was rejected for the second time, SHO was faced with some crucial decisions. Should the process of creating a strategic plan be abandoned altogether, should SHO continue to apply for grants requesting funds for technical assistance, or should SHO attempt to strategic plan on its own?

At this time, the SHO Board decided to continue with their goal to create a strategic plan but they decided to go ahead without outside technical assistance. For this reason, a Board subcommittee, the Planning and Operations Committee, was formed with the responsibility of implementing the strategic planning process. The Planning and Operations committee consisted of five board members with one of the five acting as the chairperson of the committee.

The committee's first responsibility was to organize and conduct a strategic planning retreat.

#### The First Strategic Planning Retreat

The first SHO strategic planning retreat was held on 18 June 1994. This retreat was held in the conference room of Independence Square from 9:00 a.m. until 2:00 p.m. The retreat

was attended by SHO staff, SHO Board Members and SHO Advisory Council. Although the meeting was held on a Saturday and in the summer, it was well attended. This fact demonstrates the willingness to participate and the strength of commitment of the members of SHO.

The chairperson of the Planning and Operations committee acted as the moderator of the retreat. Other committee members were responsible for note taking. The retreat began with members thinking about SHO and trying to answer two questions:

1. What are we?
2. What are we to become?

These questions led to a further discussion of various strengths and weaknesses of SHO.

The format of the retreat was informal. Members were asked to freely state strengths and weaknesses of the organization in different subcategories. The answers were written on large white paper that was tacked up around the room. The subcategories were funding, programs, physical plant (office space), promotion, mission statement, and organizational structure.

The list of strengths and weaknesses uncovered at the retreat within each of the subcategories is listed in appendix 3-4.

In addition to discussing the strengths and weaknesses of SHO, other issues were also raised during the retreat. These issues included that in addition to analyzing the internal environment of SHO, outside factors integral to the functioning of SHO, must also be considered. An analysis of the outside environment will be discussed later in this chapter.



It is important to note that it was at the end of this meeting that the current executive director of SHO announced her resignation. The effects of this resignation will be discussed in Chapter 4.

### Planning Committee Meetings

#### First Meeting

After the first retreat the Planning Committee met for its first meeting on 23 September 1994. This meeting lasted approximately 2 hours, and was attended by four of the five committee members. The agenda of this meeting was to discuss the next steps of the strategic planning process and to summarize what occurred at the retreat.

It was decided that each of the members of the committee would take one of the subcategories of strengths and weaknesses from the retreat and try to come up with a consensus.

The committee decided to meet again in one month to discuss the summaries of each category.

#### Second Meeting

The second meeting of the Planning and Operations Committee was held on 26 October 1994. This meeting lasted 2 hours, and was attended by all five of the committee members. The purpose of this meeting was to further refine the summaries from each of the categories. The summaries represent a consensus of the strengths and weaknesses identified at the retreat.

The summaries were as follows:

#### *Physical Plant*

1. SHO is located in a pleasant, easily accessible, reasonably priced building that facilitates cost-effective resource sharing with other allied nonprofit agencies and the University of R.I..

2. Office space is adequate for current and estimated 3 year needs. Partitioning adjustments need to be made to improve privacy for clients and staff, and to enhance professional atmosphere.

3. SHO's current workload indicates the need for one additional computer and printer.

#### *Funding*

1. SHO's major source of funding will continue to be governmental grants, major gifts, and external grant funding sources.

2. Fund raising activities are, presently, unfocused, distributed among many varied and small projects. Because there is a limited number of staff in SHO, there is a need to phase out this approach in favor of identifying only a few major fund raising events during the year which would be done by the board.

3. Cost-benefit ratios of fund raising activities and proposals by staff would be examined and approved, prior to implementation, by the Planning and Operations Committee and the Board.

At this time a **critical issue** for funding emerged:

1. Need to create a focus on several potential major funding sources.

### *Promotion*

1. Continued use of print and electronic media to "sell" the SHO mission and message to the general public, SHO volunteers, and policy makers.
2. Attempt to nurture and expand SHO's political base through use of Board member and staff contact with local and state elected officials.
3. Have staff consult with a "professional" in the marketing area to assist in a promotional plan for SHO.

At this time two **critical issues** were identified:

1. The SHO logo needs clarification and redesigning.
2. Need for a promotional plan.

In addition, a summary of the mission's strengths and weaknesses resulted in the creation of a clearer mission statement.

### *Mission Statement*

To promote volunteerism among seniors by serving as a clearinghouse that matches volunteers with suitable placements; and to promote or manage programs which serve the community.

It was decided that the summaries of organizational structure and programs would be discussed at the next committee meeting. It was also decided that in the interest of time a survey conducted two years ago of the "stations" (organizations where the volunteers volunteer) would be used for assessing their needs and views of SHO.

Finally, one committee member was assigned to look at the external environment in which SHO operates. This external assessment included specifically examining and projecting the demographics, the senior volunteers, the political and economic climate of the area and updating the "station" survey. This information would also be discussed at the next committee meeting.

### Third Meeting

The third meeting of the Planning and Operations Committee was held on 9 November 1994. This meeting lasted for one and half hours and was attended by four of the five committee members. The purpose of this meeting was to discuss the summary of the organization and program category notes and the external environment assessment.

The strengths and weaknesses of the *organization* were summarized as follows:

1. High quality members.
2. Insufficient resources.
3. The assignment of responsibilities among individuals, committees, advisory council and board needs review and clarification.
4. There needs to be more organizational presence at satellite locations throughout Washington County.

As a result, three **critical issues** emerged;

1. The need to balance workload and available resources. Planning for the future has to be sensitive to this need by managing commitments and adjusting resources as appropriate and within budgeted funds.
2. The need to define a broad functional purpose of the advisory council, board of directors, committees and operating individuals and then define specific responsibilities.

3. Attention to other local nonprofit organizations to search for opportunities for collaborative efforts.

The strengths and weaknesses of SHO's *programs* were summarized as follows:

1. Programs have promotional value.
2. Programs are responsive to individual needs.
3. Programs limited by funding.
4. Programs are too broadly based.

As a result of the summary of strengths and weaknesses two **critical issues** emerged;

1. how do we create a focus.
2. how do we assess promotional value and capitalize on it to promote funding and foster growth.

In addition, the mission statement was further refined to read as follows:

To promote volunteerism among seniors by serving as a clearinghouse which matches volunteers with suitable placements; and encourage and/or manage programs which serve the community.

The report on the external environment was also discussed and accepted. A copy of this report, including the results of the "station" survey is located in appendix 3-5.

The last issue discussed at this meeting was that of organizing a second retreat. The purpose of this retreat would be to create strategies to handle the critical issues that have emerged. The meeting would also be used to update the organization on the strategic planning process to date. Invitations to this strategic retreat would be extended to the same

individuals (Board members, Advisory Council members and staff) as the first retreat. The tentative date for this retreat was set for January.

This committee ended this meeting and decided to meet again in December 1994.

#### Fourth Meeting

The fourth meeting of the Planning and Operations Committee was held on 28 December 1994. This meeting lasted for one and half hours and was attended by all five of the committee members. The purpose of this meeting was to complete old business and to finalize plans for the upcoming strategic retreat.

During this meeting the committee debated over the considerations for action that each member had put forth. These proposed actions would be the basis for discussion at the strategic retreat. These considerations for action are listed below beneath each of the subheadings. The subheading of physical plant was merged into organizational structure.

#### *Organizational Structure*

1. Review collective talents that SHO has versus the talents that SHO needs and where the talents reside (board, council, staff).
2. Define roles and responsibilities of each branch of SHO.
3. Investigate link and/or overlap with other local agencies.
4. Specify minimum and desirable features of computer system.

#### *Funding*

1. Develop a strategy to solicit specific funding, i.e. major gifts, government etc.

### *Mission Statement*

1. Work with revised mission statement for six months.

### *Promotion*

1. Continued use of print and electronic media to sell SHO mission and message to general public, SHO volunteers, and policy makers.
2. Attempt to nurture and expand SHO's political base through use of board members and staff contact with local and state elected officials.
3. Have staff consult with a professional in marketing to assist in the creation of a promotion plan.
4. Investigate the need for a new SHO logo.

### *Programs*

1. Investigate the value to the community of each of the SHO programs.

A summary of all the strengths, weaknesses, critical issues and considerations for action for each of the subcategories is found in appendix 3-6.

It was decided by the committee that the focus would be only on the topics of organizational structure and funding during the retreat. The committee felt that these two areas were crucial to the survival of SHO and that the issues promotion and programs would be integral to the discussions of organizational structure and funding. Finally, the committee decided that it would present the retreat members with the revised mission statement. It would be understood that no changes would be made to it at the current time, but that this was a working document which after six months, should be reviewed for changes.

The strategic retreat was scheduled for 21 January 1995 and this date was approved at the December board meeting. Once again all Board members, Advisory Council members and SHO staff were invited to attend. The retreat was scheduled to last from 9:00 am until about 2:00 pm with a break for a potluck lunch.

It was decided at this committee meeting that the retreat would be used to accomplish a few tasks. First, the committee would update the retreat members on the process that was undertaken and explain each of the strategic planning steps that were employed. Second, the retreat would be used to formalize action plans to address the critical issues that were uncovered during the strategic planning process. Finally, the retreat would be used to assign individuals and/or committees to implement these action plans.

The strategic management committee felt strongly that after this retreat their work as a committee was finished. Once the plans were made for implementation the strategic planning process was complete and therefore the committee was no longer necessary. However, the committee recognized that they still had to develop a written document which would discuss the findings of the strategic plan. No definite plans for writing this document were discussed at this meeting.

#### The Second Strategic Planning Retreat

The second strategic retreat was held on 21 January 1995 at the Kingston Congregational Church. This meeting lasted from 9 am until 2:30 pm.



Eighteen SHO members attended the retreat. Ten of the attendees were Board members, seven were on the Advisory Council, and one, the executive director, was a staff member. Eight of the participants were also present at the first strategic retreat held in June 1994.

The meeting began with the chairperson of the strategic planning committee reviewing the strategic process and discussing the remaining timeline for the project. The chairperson stated that a final written document of the plan would be completed by June; one year after the first retreat and one year after the strategic planning process officially began .

After the chairperson's introduction, one member of the Planning and Operations committee reported on the external environment assessment (see appendix 3-5 for this report). The purpose of this was to familiarize the group with local demographics and other outside forces that may effect SHO's operation.

The next issue on the agenda was the discussion of the revised mission statement. The Planning and Operations committee presented the revised mission statement to the group with the suggestion that they abide by it for six months and then assess the need for changes. Overall the response was positive. The members liked the new mission statement. As a result, the group unanimously endorsed the mission statement and recommended that it be voted in by the Board.

The remainder of the day was spent discussing strategies to deal with the two identified key areas that are crucial to SHO's survival: fundraising and organization. Each member was given summary sheets on these areas including the recognized strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats and critical issues. Appendix 3-7 contains a copy of these summaries.

The first area discussed was fundraising. The critical issue was determined to be that SHO is underfunded and relies too heavily on miscellaneous fundraising events that demand too much organizational effort. The two issues that needed to be addressed were how to increase funding and how to clarify the responsibility for funding. After much discussion, the group came up with five strategies to address these issues.

1. Within the Development Committee, there should be three subcommittees; each with its own chair and responsibilities. The three subcommittees would consist of grant, major donors and special events subcommittees. It was decided that the Development Committee should be the backbone of fundraising events but the mission was too much responsibility for just one chairperson to oversee. It was also recognized that this committee would be responsible for planning the fundraising activities and that other SHO members would be assigned by the committee to help implement the activities.

2. Create a fundraising calendar. This calendar would not only show that dates of the events but would also show the dates that plans should be made and who was responsible for each task of the plan. This calendar would be maintained by a member of the Development Committee.

3. Create a talent database. Have each board member, advisory council member and SHO volunteer fill out a talent inventory sheet. This information would then be input into the computer to better understand the existing pool of talent. This information would then be utilized for fundraising activities and other SHO needs.

4. Solicit donations from the "stations" where SHO volunteers volunteer. Research is needed, however, on how this issue is handled by other RSVP agencies.

5. Further pursue donations from local churches.

Although grants are considered part of fundraising, four specific strategies were also created to help increase grant funding.

1. Enlist the help of someone knowledgeable in grants to help research and find future grant opportunities.

2. Research opportunities for collaborative efforts with other nonprofit organizations. Current trends indicate that grants are favoring collaborative efforts.

3. Pursue CGP (Community Grant Programs) town grants.

4. Invite grant funders to SHO functions. This promotes good public relations and serves as a way to cultivate relationships with the money givers.

The **second crucial area** that was discussed at the retreat was organization. The critical issue that was identified in this area was that the organizational structure of SHO needed review and clarity especially in regards to the definition of functional responsibilities. Within SHO, there were two areas that needed to be addressed. First, a review of the talents that SHO currently has and a determination of the kind of talents it may need in the future. Second, improving organizational communications and avoiding overlap of responsibilities. After much discussion, the group derived three strategies to address these issues.

1. Create the talent inventory mentioned in the fundraising section.

2. Pursue a more diverse Board of Directors. More specifically, the Board of Directors needs grant writers and politically affiliated individuals.

3. Clarify the role of the Advisory Council. First, research is needed on how other RSVP organizations, especially Woonsocket RSVP, utilize their councils.

In addition, two other general strategies were presented.

1. To enhance public relations and name recognition, SHO volunteers should wear a SHO button signifying that they are a SHO volunteer whenever they volunteer.

2. The current Planning and Operations committee would be responsible for long-range planning once the strategic planning process is complete.

The meeting ended on a positive note with members feeling that some advancements had been made. The Planning committee restated that a written report would be completed by June 1995.

## **Conclusion**

Senior Helping Other's strategic planning process was very slow to get started but, once it began, it moved along smoothly and efficiently. The success of the process was attributed to the chairperson of the committee who kept the process moving and focused. It is important to remember that the Planning and Operations committee is comprised of Board of Director members. Each of these members contributed to the strategic planning process in their spare time. Each committee member also had a full time job, a family and other

time commitments. Based on this fact, SHO's strategic planning process was a successful feat.

The next chapter will compare SHO's strategic planning experience with the model outlined in Chapter 2. A pattern matching technique (Yin, 1989) will be employed to look for areas of similarities and contrast.

## **Chapter 4**

### **Findings and Conclusions**

#### **Introduction**

This chapter will combine the findings of the case study example presented in Chapter three with the theoretical framework of Backoff and Nutt (1988) and discussed in Chapter two. The purpose of this present chapter is to determine how well the actual strategic planning process of Seniors Helping Others fits the theoretical strategic planning model of Backoff and Nutt (1988). The comparison between the case study example and the theoretical framework will be accomplished by employing a technique called pattern matching.

#### **Pattern Matching Methodology**

Pattern matching is one of the most desirable strategies for case study analysis (Yin, 1989). This method compares several pieces of information from a case study to some theoretical proposition. For this project, the actual experience of SHO's strategic planning will be matched to the theoretical framework of Backoff and Nutt (1988). A purpose of this comparison will be to determine how well the Backoff and Nutt (1988) model works for an actual nonprofit organization.

Yin (1989) cautions that due to the lack of precision of the technique, pattern matching should be applied only to case studies where outcomes lead to gross matches or mismatches and where an "eyeballing" techniques is sufficiently convincing to draw a conclusion. Therefore, the findings of this study will concentrate globally on whether SHO followed the different stages of the theoretical model as opposed to focusing on the

smaller details of the strategic planning process. The findings will also include the problems that SHO encountered that were not addressed by the Backoff and Nutt (1988) model.

## **Findings**

As discussed in Chapter three, Seniors Helping Others strategic planning process encountered some problems early on. Some of the issues that led to these problems are not adequately addressed in the strategic management framework of Backoff and Nutt (1988). These issues will be discussed later in the chapter. The first part of this chapter will attempt to match SHO's process against the theoretical framework of Backoff and Nutt (1988). More specifically, this comparison will look for areas where SHO did not follow the model. Conclusions will be drawn and suggestions will be given based on the above findings of the comparison. The next section will address the issues that SHO encountered during the process that were not provided for in the model. Finally, an assessment of SHO's success at strategic planning will be presented.

### Beginning the Process

Backoff and Nutt (1988) recommended forming a "strategic management group" to be responsible for conducting the strategic planning process. This group should range from five to 15 members and be comprised of the Chief Executive Officer, senior staff, Board members and strong stakeholders. Backoff and Nutt (1988) also suggest occasionally employing an outside consultant.

In the case of Seniors Helping Others this type of "strategic management group" was not possible. The SHO staff is comprised of one full time Executive Director and two part time assistants. Due to other time commitments within SHO, these employees were unable to

devote the necessary time to the strategic planning project without the organization suffering. Therefore, SHO's "strategic management group" was comprised of five Board members, the Planning and Operations committee, who voluntarily decided to work on this project. While the stakeholders were not part of the committee, both they and the SHO staff did participate in both of the strategic retreats.

SHO had made attempts to employ an outside consultant to provide technical assistance to the project. SHO has limited funding. Therefore, SHO needed to rely on an outside grant to pay for this technical assistance. As previously mentioned, this grant request was rejected twice. Therefore, SHO had to rely on in-house Board member experience for the strategic planning process.

#### Stage 1 - Historical Context

Backoff and Nutt (1988) recommend that the "strategic management group" examine the historical context of the organization. The group should specifically be looking for trends, critical events, directions and ideals and note the changes that the organization has gone through during its development. Backoff and Nutt (1988) suggest using interviews and surveys for accomplishing this task.

The "strategic management group" of SHO did not conduct an explicit examination of SHO's historical context. Members relied on their own knowledge to form the historical context of the organization. While most of the committee had basic knowledge of the organization there were definite gaps in this information. Three of the five members were affiliated with the organization for under two years, and a fourth member had, within the last few months joined the Board. Only one member of the committee had been affiliated with SHO, on and off, since its early days.



This lack of historical knowledge sometimes caused misunderstandings. In fact, some of the committee members were even unclear as to why SHO had decided to create a strategic plan.

Although past knowledge of SHO was not complete, the committee was able to envision where the organization might be headed in the next five years. This information was obtained from the committee pooling their knowledge of SHO and from the input of other board members. Many of the early committee meetings focused on the mission of SHO and how it should change to better reflect what SHO was about and where SHO might be headed in the future. This helped to gain a clearer future vision for SHO.

Even though SHO did not formally complete the first stage of Backoff and Nutt's model, the members were still able to understand where the organization had been and create a vision and a new mission statement to better reflect SHO's present functioning and future development. SHO's version of the historical context did enable them to advance further in the strategic planning process

It is important to note that while Backoff and Nutt (1988) suggest that stage one be accomplished first before moving into stage two, the situational assessment, SHO actually worked on stage one and stage two simultaneously. The "strategic management group" used the information gathered from the situational assessment to help understand the organization, its past, and its possible future.

#### Stage 2 - Situational Assessment

This stage is used to assess the immediate situation of the organization. Backoff and Nutt (1988) recommend using this stage for recognizing the organization's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT).

Seniors Helping Others addressed part of this stage by holding the first strategic retreat. At this retreat, the strengths and weaknesses of the organization as a whole as well as various individual components were discovered. This first retreat served as the internal assessment of the organization.

The external assessment, the organization's opportunities and threats, was accomplished on two separate occasions. The first was a survey of the stations where the volunteers work to determine the stations views on SHO, its volunteers, and their future needs. This survey was conducted a few years prior to this strategic planning process but the data was considered essential and was therefore used. The information was updated by one of the committee members to make its more current.

The second part of the external assessment, consisted of a written report that was researched by one of the committee members and approved by the remaining members of the "strategic management group". This report included current demographics, economic conditions, and political conditions of the geographic area in which SHO operates. The report also included projections about these conditions in the near future.

Aside from conducting this stage simultaneously with the first one, SHO followed the Backoff and Nutt (1988) model. SHO was then able to move to the third stage with all the pertinent information necessary.

### Stage 3 - The Issue Agenda

According to the Backoff and Nutt (1988) model, this stage begins with the "strategic management group" recognizing the keys issues, discussing them and ranking them in

order of importance. The second part of this stage focuses on identifying actions to manage and address these issues.

The "strategic management group" of Seniors Helping Others spent many of the committee meetings identifying the key issues. The group used the information gathered at the retreat and from it gleaned the main context and thus the critical issues. This group did not attempt to rank the issues, nor was there ever a discussion on whether or not to rank them. The group considered each issue to be pertinent to the organization.

During this stage the "strategic management group" of SHO also began to identify ways to manage the issues. One problem the group encountered was in creating ways to handle issues before clearly understanding the root of the issue itself. The group continually rechecked itself to make sure that it clearly identified the issue before attempting to find a way to solve it.

Aside from not ranking the issues, SHO appeared to follow the Backoff and Nutt (1988) model. This enabled SHO to proceed to the next stage of the strategic planning process.

#### Stage 4 - Strategic Options

This stage focuses on creating strategies for the issues identified in the previous stage. According to Backoff and Nutt (1988), this stage reviews the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats identified previously in stage two.

Backoff and Nutt (1988) recommend that each member of the committee be given a sheet of paper with each issue and the issue's relevant strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. The committee members are then asked to invent actions that build on the strengths of the issue, overcome its weaknesses, exploit its opportunities and blunt its threats.

After each committee member has completed his/her list, the lists are then open for discussion so that ideas can be rearranged and new ideas can be added. Finally, a list of strategies is formed by combining all the individual lists.

Backoff and Nutt (1988) end this stage with the committee evaluating each of the strategies based on specific criteria. The criteria includes cost, feasibility, acceptance and effectiveness. The criteria are used to narrow down the strategies to one or two specific actions.

During this stage, the SHO "strategic management group" did identify strategic options for the critical issues previously identified. The chairman of the committee gave each member a sheet of paper that had each of the five main areas (organizational structure, funding, mission statement, promotion and programs) with their strengths/opportunities, weaknesses/threats, and critical issues listed. This information was culled from all the previous meetings. In addition, the chairman also listed considerations for action beside each area. This information was mailed to committee members prior to the fourth committee meeting with the instructions that each member should change and add anything s/he felt was pertinent.

At the subsequent committee meeting, the members all discussed the considerations for action and made the necessary changes until the members were satisfied with the results.

Although SHO's procedure did not follow exactly Backoff and Nutt's (1988) model, it did still produce the end result of creating strategies to address the issues. SHO's procedure was probably not as democratic as the Backoff and Nutt (1988) model. This is because SHO's selected strategies were influenced by the early suggestions of the chairperson. In

certain cases, this may prevent committee members from offering their own suggestions because they do not want to go against the chairperson. This procedure may also inhibit creativity because committee members were given options before they had to create their own.

SHO also deviated from the model at the end of this stage. The strategies that were proposed were never subjected to evaluative criteria including cost and effectiveness. Instead, the committee members narrowed down their strategies by focusing on the areas that seemed critical to the survival of SHO. The decision to limit action to those strategies that applied only to organizational structure and to funding was how the SHO committee narrowed down its strategies.

Since the "strategic management group" did not consider criteria such as cost, effectiveness and feasibility, the strategies may face problems later during implementation. However, the committee felt that it was crucial to focus on the areas of survival (organizational structure and funding) and to consider all strategies related to these areas.

These strategies were then brought to the second strategic retreat and discussed among the larger group. This step moved the SHO strategic planning process into Backoff and Nutt's next stage.

#### Stage 5 - Feasibility Assessment

It is at this stage that SHO began to strongly deviate from the Backoff and Nutt (1988) model.

During this stage, Backoff and Nutt (1988) suggest that a stakeholder analysis is conducted to determine who will be affected by the new strategy and who can help to implement it.

Stakeholders are ranked as to whether they support or oppose a specific strategy, and then the stakeholders themselves are ranked as to how important they are to the organization. Categorizing the stakeholders and their views on the strategy helps the organization determine what they are up against in implementing the strategy. Strategies with higher support are more likely to be successful.

In addition to ranking the stakeholders and their views, Backoff and Nutt (1988) also suggest analyzing the available resources in the same fashion. Both internal and external resources should be considered. Those strategies that have the necessary resources available are more likely to be successful.

During the second retreat, SHO conducted its own form of a feasibility assessment. At this meeting the strategies were presented to those members who were in attendance. The strategies were open to review and comments were highly encouraged. By doing this, the "strategic management group" of SHO was determining which of their strategies were supported and which were not. However, the "strategic management group" was only able to consider the views of those in attendance. Views of those not in attendance at the second retreat were not considered in this stakeholder analysis.

No formal ranking of the stakeholders was conducted as suggested by Backoff and Nutt (1988). Instead, stakeholder's views were used to refine the strategies and create actual steps toward implementing them. In SHO's case, the stakeholders (the attending retreat members) had a more active role in the process than the one suggested by Backoff and Nutt (1988). In the Backoff and Nutt (1988) model, the views of the stakeholders are considered only in choosing the strategies not in helping to refine them.

One area of the Backoff and Nutt (1988) model that SHO did not address was that of available and necessary resources. Although SHO is very concerned about both financial

and human resources and both were mentioned during the discussions, no specific actions regarding resources were ever suggested. As each strategy was discussed, no formal assignments as to who was responsible and how the strategy was actually going to get accomplished was ever discussed. This omission may lead to problems in SHO's success in implementing its strategic plan. Without any specific assignments of responsibility, the "ball may be dropped" and the strategies that looked so good on paper may never occur.

#### Stage 6 - Implementation

Backoff and Nutt (1988) suggest using this stage as a time to create tactics to deal with the results of the stakeholder and resources analyses conducted in stage five. The tactics include ways of influencing those stakeholders who were against a specific strategy. The rationale for this tactic is that the more people who are in favor of a strategy the more likely it is to get implemented and be successful.

Since SHO did not follow Backoff and Nutt's (1988) model in stage five they were unable to do so in stage six. Instead, SHO used the implementation stage in its more traditional sense. As previously mentioned, at the retreat, members identified steps and procedures to help implement the strategies. Once again, missing from this information was the crucial decision of who would be responsible for seeing each strategy to its successful implementation.

#### **Conclusions**

In general, SHO did follow the Strategic Management Process outlined by Backoff and Nutt (1988). There were, however, five major areas where SHO deviated from the model.

**First,** SHO's "strategic management group" was comprised only of Board members. Although others were included in both retreats, a future suggestion would be to include a member of the Advisory Council and a staff member on the Planning and Operations committee. This would help to ensure that more viewpoints are considered during the entire strategic planning process. Outside stakeholder views were also not included in most of the strategic planning process. There was no representation from the outside community, the "stations" where the volunteers work, or any agency that interacts with SHO on the committee or at the retreats. The only external stakeholder views that were considered in the strategic planning process were those of the "stations" that completed the assessment survey. This survey was part of the external environment assessment and the results are located in appendix 3-5. Including outside stakeholders in the process would have ensured that additional and different viewpoints were considered.

**Second,** SHO did not conduct a formal historical context search as stage one of the process. Instead, committee members each relied on their own knowledge. Formally completing a formal historical context during this stage may have helped committee members fill in blank areas. This would also have been particularly useful to the new members of the organization.

**Third,** during stage four the "strategic management group" of SHO did not use evaluative criteria to narrow down its proposed strategies. Instead SHO chose to concentrate on the strategies that pertained to the two areas that were crucial to SHO's survival, organization and funding. Two proposed strategies were designed for each of the two functional areas. SHO felt that since there were not a large amount of strategies (4), additional evaluative criteria was unnecessary. The decision to focus on the four crucial strategies and not use evaluative criteria did not appear to pose a problem for SHO. However, if there had been



more proposed strategies, SHO would have needed some additional criteria to limit the amount.

**Fourth**, during stage five the "strategic management group" of SHO did not formally conduct a stakeholder analysis or a resource analysis. By not conducting these analyses, especially resources, SHO may potentially impede the success of some of their strategies. This is especially true as SHO did not address who will be responsible for implementing each of the proposed strategies. Without assigning ownership to the plan after it is completed it is likely to fail.

**Fifth**, the "strategic management group" of SHO did not follow stage six of the model. Instead they chose to use this stage for creating steps to implement the strategies. This option appeared more practical for SHO. A crucial flaw in SHO's implementation step was that they neglected to assign responsibilities for executing the new strategies.

Of all the areas mentioned above, one appears to be the most important. Without assigning responsibilities, SHO is almost destined to have some or all of their strategies fail. If no one person or group is chosen to follow through with the implementation of the strategies then all the previous work is almost useless. The other four areas, while they deviate from the Backoff and Nutt (1988) model, do not seem as critical. A successful strategic planning process can still occur without them.

#### Problems not Addressed by Model

The following section explores the problems SHO encountered in their strategic planning process that are not adequately addressed by the Backoff and Nutt (1988) model.

The size of Senior Helping Other's staff and members was an issue in numerous instances during the strategic planning process. First, the small size of the paid staff prevented them from committing adequate time to the project. This resulted in Board members running the entire strategic planning process. Board members and staff often have different perspectives of the organization and therefore both should have been represented on the committee.

Another area not adequately addressed by the Backoff and Nutt (1988) model, was SHO's inability to obtain technical assistance. Although the Backoff and Nutt (1988) model suggests obtaining this assistance, it was virtually impossible for SHO. Luckily, Board members had experience in strategic planning, but their experience was in the business sector not the nonprofit sector.

One area, which was anticipated as a problem was that of the resignation of the Executive Director soon after the strategic planning process began. Prior to her resignation, the Executive Director appeared to be the driving force behind creating a strategic plan. It was thought that her departure might be the demise of the plan. Surprisingly, this was a mistaken scenario. Perhaps the process had already taken on life of its own and was able to continue without her influence.

Finally, the Backoff and Nutt (1988) model does not address ways to keep the process going after running into roadblocks, such as, not receiving technical assistance and/or losing key members to the organization. The model describes how to follow the steps and create a strategic plan. Often, however, the real act is not as simple. Events occur or situations change and without contingency plans the organization may be lost. By not providing options, the model limits its usage because many organizations do not fit into the specified mold.

### Was it a success?

Although SHO may not have precisely followed a particular model and the agency had numerous problems along the way, their process can be considered a success. The process succeeded in producing numerous strategies to address the issues that were determined important to the organization. However, only time will determine how successful these strategies are if and when they are implemented.

The only area, one that is critical and where I see potential problems, is that of assigning responsibilities. In a small organization where everyone is more than one hundred percent committed, it is unlikely that someone will assume large responsibilities without having them formally assigned. If a staff member does assume new responsibilities then the current workload is likely to suffer. Without this key piece of the process, the strategies that SHO worked so hard to create may never be implemented.

Even so, one unanticipated benefit of the process to the organization was that it brought the Board members closer to each other and to other members of the organization, including staff, Advisory Council and the volunteers. It also made the Board more aware of and connected to the daily operations of SHO.

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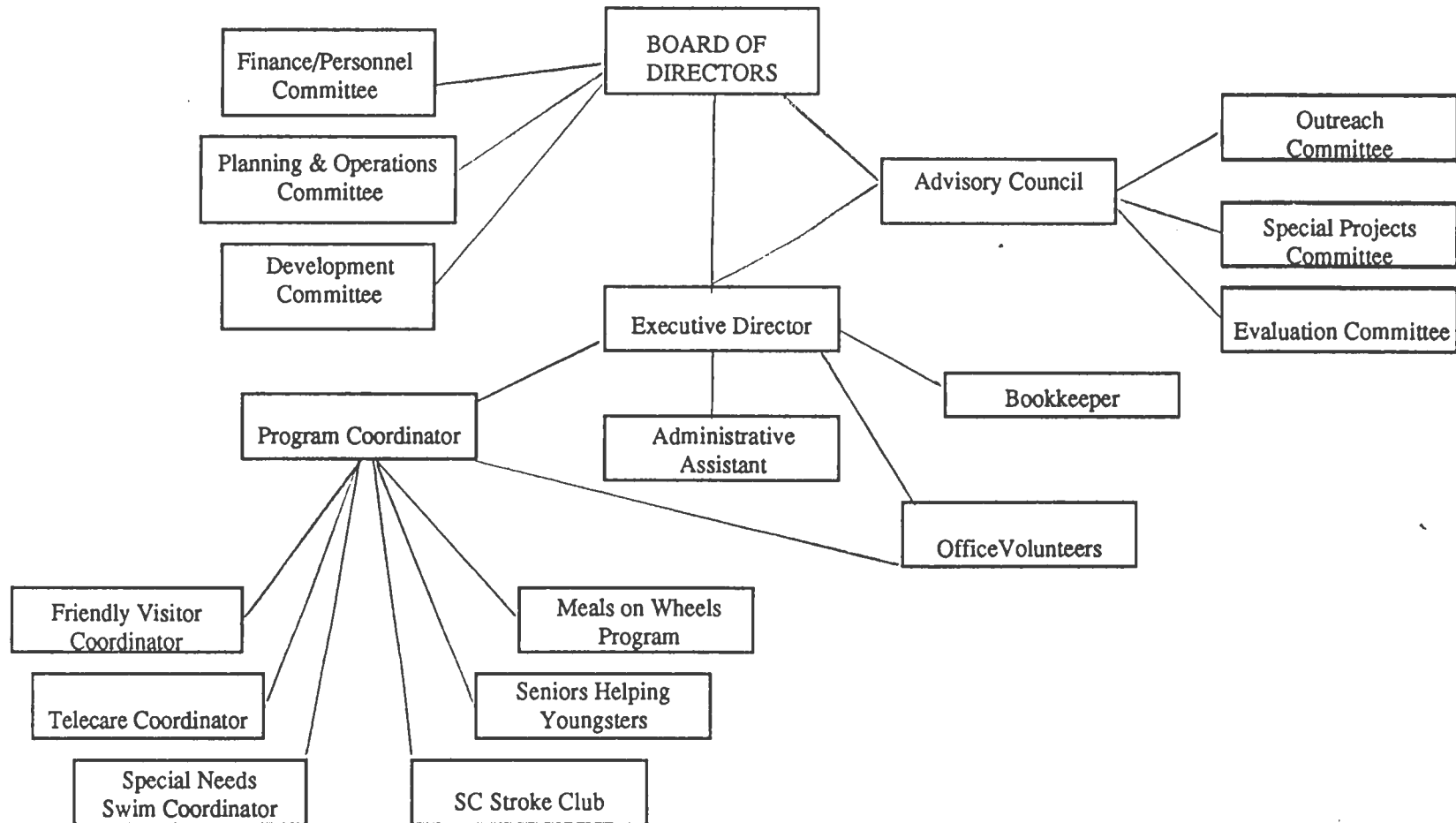
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## APPENDIX



## **APPENDIX 3-1**

## SHO ORGANIZATIONAL CHART



## **APPENDIX 3-2**

BY-LAWS  
SENIORS HELPING OTHERS

Article I - NAME

Section 1. The name of this Corporation shall be SENIORS HELPING OTHERS.

Article II - MISSION

Section 1. The mission of the Corporation shall be to establish and encourage volunteerism for charitable purposes among Washington County and Jamestown, Rhode Island residents age 55 and over.

Section 2. SENIORS HELPING OTHERS will recruit seniors; assess and utilize their skills and interests; offer appropriate placements in community agencies; and provide continuing support and encouragement.

Article III - FISCAL YEAR

Section 1. The fiscal year shall begin July 1 and end June 30th.

Article IV - MEMBERSHIP

Section 1. Any person who is interested in the mission of the Corporation as stated in Article II and who is at least 18 years of age shall be eligible for membership in SENIORS HELPING OTHERS .

Article V - MEETINGS

Section 1. ANNUAL MEETING. The Annual Meeting of the Corporation shall be held in September or October of each year at a time and place to be determined by the Board of Directors.

Section 2. SPECIAL MEETINGS. Special meetings of the Corporation may be called by the President with the consent of five members of the Board of Directors, or at the written request of any five members of the Board of Directors.

Section 3. NOTICE. The Secretary shall give written notice of the Annual Meeting and/or Special meetings of the members of the Corporation. That notice, stating the purpose of the meeting and time and place thereof, shall be mailed to each member of the Corporation at his/her last known address at least 10 days prior to such meeting.

Section 4. QUORUM. Twenty (20) members of the Corporation shall constitute a quorum. When a quorum is present, a majority of the members present may decide any question brought before the meeting.

Section 5. CONTENT. Business transacted at the Annual Meeting shall include:

- a. The election of Directors
- b. The election of Officers
- c. Consideration of reports of Standing and Special Committees

ARTICLE VI - BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Section 1. MEMBERSHIP. Members of the Board of Directors shall consist of the officers and at least eleven (11), but not more than twenty-one (21), members who represent a broad cross-section of the community including older adults, minority representatives, and providers of services to older adults. The Executive Director of the Corporation shall be an ex-officio member of the Board of Directors.

## Section 2. TERM OF OFFICE.

- (a) Directors shall be elected for three year terms as the terms of office of the various Directors expire.
- (b) A Director may serve for two successive three year terms. One year must intervene before such Board member is again eligible for election.
- (c) In case of a vacancy on the Board of Directors, the remaining Directors may elect a successor to fill the unexpired term.

## Section 3. MEETINGS

- (a) The Board of Directors shall meet at least four times a year.
- (b) A meeting of the Board of Directors shall take place within thirty (30) days after the Annual Meeting of the Corporation. At such meeting, the President shall appoint, subject to approval by the Board, persons to chair all Standing Committees.
- (c) Meetings of the Board of Directors may be called at any time by the President or on the written request of five members of the Board. Notice of all meetings shall be given to each Director in person, by telephone, or by mail, at least five days prior to the date of the meeting.
- (d) One quarter (25%) of the members of the Board of Directors shall constitute a quorum. When a quorum is present, a majority of the members present may decide any question brought before the meeting.
- (e) Any Director who has three or more unexcused absences from Board meetings in a year may be dropped from Board membership by a vote of the Board of Directors. Excused absences will be granted for illness or other family emergency, or for absence from the community.

## ARTICLE VII - OFFICERS

Section 1. ELECTION. The officers of the Corporation shall be President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer. The officers shall be elected at the Annual Meeting of the Corporation for a term of one year. No officer may serve in the same office for more than three consecutive one year terms. In the case of a vacancy in any office, the Board of Directors may elect a successor to fill the unexpired term.

## Section 2. DUTIES

- (a) The President shall be the chief executive officer of the Corporation and shall preside at all meetings of the Corporation, of the Executive Committee and of the Board of Directors. The President shall appoint legal and financial counsel and persons to chair all Committees. The President shall be a member ex-officio of all Standing Committees, except the Nominating Committee.
- (b) The Vice President shall perform all duties of the President in the event of the absence, inability or failure to act of the President, or in the event of a vacancy in that office, and shall perform such other duties as are requested by the President.

- (c) The Secretary shall keep all records of meetings of the Corporation, of the Executive Committee and of the Board of Directors; shall be responsible for the general correspondence of the Board of Directors; shall notify the Executive Committee and the Board of Directors of all meetings; shall notify the members of the Corporation of the Annual Meeting and of any Special Meetings; and shall perform all other related duties of the office.
- (d) The Treasurer shall receive and have custody of the securities and funds of the Corporation and deposit such funds in a Bank or Trust Company approved by the Board of Directors; shall pay all bills under regulations prescribed by the Board of Directors; shall keep complete and accurate accounts of all financial transactions; and shall present a written statement of the financial condition of the Corporation at the Annual Meeting and at each regular meeting of the Board of Directors. Upon expiration of the term of office, the Treasurer shall return to the Board of Directors, all books, monies, papers, and other property which belong to the Corporation.

Section 3. STAFF OFFICERS: The Board of Directors shall appoint an Executive Director who shall be responsible to the Board. The Executive Director shall attend all meetings of the Executive Committee, of the Board, and of the Corporation; shall be responsible for the development and administration of the Corporation's programs within the provisions of the approved budget; shall be responsible for the appointment of all members of the staff and for their tenure and conditions of employment according to the guidelines provided by the Finance/Personnel Committee; and shall report all matters of importance to the Board of Directors at each meeting of the Board.

#### ARTICLE VIII - EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Section 1. COMPOSITION. The Executive Committee shall consist of the officers and the chairpersons of the Standing Committees. A majority of the Executive Committee shall constitute a quorum.

#### Section 2. DUTIES.

(a) The Executive Committee shall have full power to act in the affairs and management of the Corporation between meetings of the Board of Directors, subject to Board approval and ratification.

(b) The Executive Committee shall, wherever possible, refer matters of policy to the Board of Directors.

Section 3. MEETINGS. The Executive Committee shall meet at least two times a year. Notice of the time and place shall be given by the Secretary.

#### ARTICLE IX - STANDING COMMITTEES

Section 1. COMPOSITION. The President of the Board of Directors shall appoint the chairperson of each Standing Committee. Each chairperson and Committee member shall be appointed for a period of one year and may serve a maximum of three successive terms in that particular capacity.

Section 2. VACANCIES. In the event that a chairperson of a committee is not able to perform his/her duties, the President shall appoint someone to fill the vacancy.

Section 3. COMMITTEES. There shall be four Standing Committees as follows:

(a) DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE. The Development Committee shall have the responsibility for submitting fund raising plans.

(b) PLANNING/OPERATIONS COMMITTEE. The Planning/Operations Committee shall oversee the development of the strategic plans, both short and long term, of SENIORS HELPING OTHERS. The Committee is also responsible for evaluation of the actual performance of SENIORS HELPING OTHERS as it subsequently emerges in actual practice relative to the above mentioned plans.

(c) FINANCE/PERSONNEL COMMITTEE. The Finance/Personnel Committee shall prepare the operating budget and shall report financial results of the Corporation as required by the Board of Directors. The Committee is also responsible for development of the personnel policies and guidelines pertaining to all members of staff, including the Executive Director.

(d) NOMINATING COMMITTEE.

1) The Nominating Committee shall present for election at the Annual Meeting of the membership a slate of the required number of officers and Board members. The Committee shall be composed of at least three members of the Corporation.

2) The Nominating Committee shall meet at least once a year and shall render a report to the President two weeks prior to the Annual Meeting. A majority of members of the Committee shall constitute a quorum, and in the presence of a quorum, shall decide its action.

#### ARTICLE X - AD HOC COMMITTEES

The creation of an AD HOC Committee to carry out a specified function for a period of time may be recommended by the Board of Directors. The chairperson of such a committee shall be appointed by the President and shall be an ex-officio member of the Board of Directors.

#### ARTICLE XI - EXECUTION OF PAPERS

Section 1. CHECKS, DRAFTS, ETC., All monies received for the account of the SENIORS HELPING OTHERS shall be turned over to the Treasurer of the Corporation or his/her designated representative. No monies shall be expended except as drawn through the Treasurer of SENIORS HELPING OTHERS, or by persons designated by the Board of Directors to make such expenditures.

Section 2. CONTRACTS AND GRANTS. All contracts and grants for service rendered to organizations and agencies by SENIORS HELPING OTHERS shall be signed by the President and approved by the Executive Committee.

#### ARTICLE XII - RESTRICTIONS

Irrespective of the powers, duties and authorizations otherwise herein contained, no officer of the Corporation, member of the Board of Directors or staff shall have the power or the authority to obligate the Corporation beyond the limits of the items in the currently approved annual budget without specific authority in writing from the Executive Committee or the Board of Directors.

### ARTICLE XIII - PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE

The latest edition of Robert's Rules of Order shall constitute the ruling authority in all cases unless those rules are inconsistent with these Bylaws or with any statute of the State of Rhode Island.

### ARTICLE XIV - FURTHER PROVISIONS

Section 1. FURTHER RESTRICTIONS. No part of the net earnings of the Corporation shall inure to the benefit of or be distributable to its members, trustees, officers or other private persons, except that the Corporation shall be authorized to pay reasonable compensation for services rendered and to make distributions in furtherance of the mission set forth in Article II hereof. The Corporation shall not become involved in any activities that could be construed as being an attempt to influence legislation or the political campaign of a candidate for public office. Notwithstanding any provision of these Articles, the Corporation shall not become involved in any activities prohibited to a corporation exempt from federal income tax under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954 ( or the corresponding provision of any subsequent United States Internal Revenue Law), or in any activities prohibited to a corporation whose contributions are deductible under section 170(c)(2) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954 (or the corresponding provision of any subsequent United States Internal Revenue Law).

Section 2. DISSOLUTION. Upon the dissolution of the Corporation the Board of Directors shall, after paying or making provision for the payment of all the liabilities of the Corporation, dispose of all of the assets of the Corporation to such organization or organizations as are operated exclusively for charitable, scientific, religious, literary or educational purposes and which at the time qualify as exempt under section 501 (c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954 ( or the corresponding provision of any subsequent United States Internal Revenue Law). Any of such assets not so disposed of shall be disposed of by the Superior Court of the county in which the principal office of the Corporation is then located, to such organizations as are operated exclusively for such purposes.

### ARTICLE XV - AMENDMENTS

These By-Laws may be amended at any regular or Special Meeting of the Board of Directors by the affirmative vote of at least two-thirds (2/3) of the members of the Board, provided that such amendments had been given or mailed to each Board member at least five days prior to the date of the meeting.



## **APPENDIX 3-3**

SENIORS HELPING OTHERS  
STATEMENT OF EXPENSES (UNAUDITED)  
Years ending June 30, 1994 and 1993

	<u>1994</u>	<u>1993</u>
Compensation	\$ 44,990	\$ 43,948
Payroll taxes	5,156	4,425
Health and other benefits	4,003	3,606
In-kind services	<u>12,965</u>	<u>7,152</u>
Total personnel expenses	67,114	59,131
Meals on wheels program	8,312	8,443
Other program expenses	1,514	1,924
Volunteer recognition	1,441	1,349
Newsletter	2,052	1,712
Local travel	347	272
Education and training	388	412
Telephone	2,107	2,333
Insurance	531	1,092
Rent	4,151	1,700
Depreciation	1,203	1,836
repairs and maintenance	0	605
Supplies and miscellaneous	2,236	1,714
Postage	1,445	1,784
Professional services	2,192	520
Bank fees	<u>248</u>	<u>430</u>
Total expenses	<u>\$ 95,281</u>	<u>\$85,257</u>

SENIORS HELPING OTHERS  
STATEMENT OF SUPPORT AND REVENUE, EXPENSES,  
AND CHANGES IN FUND BALANCES (UNAUDITED)  
Years ending June 30, 1994 and 1993

	<u>1994</u>	<u>1993</u>
Support and revenue		
Grants:		
State of Rhode Island,		
Department of Elderly Affairs	\$ 30,375	\$33,750
Foundations	10,050	3,000
Contributions:		
Annual Fund and others	15,542	14,718
United Way - Donor option	4,029	3,026
Municipalities	4,927	3,900
In-kind	13,280	7,152
Program fees:		
Meals on wheels	8,333	7,962
Fund raising events:		
Calendar drawings, net of		
prizes and expenses	2,434	1,700
Other	5,268	4,687
Interest income	<u>40</u>	<u>90</u>
Total support and revenue	94,778	79,985
Expenses		
(See accompanying schedule)	<u>95,281</u>	<u>85,257</u>
Excess (deficiency) of support and		
revenue over (under) expenses	(503)	(5,272)
Fund balance, beginning of year	<u>4,008</u>	<u>9,280</u>
Fund balance, end of year	<u>\$3,505</u>	<u>\$4,008</u>

## **APPENDIX 3-4**

## **Funding**

### Strengths

1. good reliable treasurer
2. volunteers who help are what keeps SHO on the road
3. volunteers/board/council work, wait, walk tables, sell
4. committed core of people who sell tickets, support fund raising
5. becoming more sophisticatedly focussed
6. fundraising gaining sophistication and scope
7. while a strain, SHO has been able to meet its funding needs up to this point, despite the increasing demand
8. have a good base of "friends of SHO"
9. staff real hustlers even for small amounts of money
10. survived critical startup phase
11. Kathy (executive director) is a real go getter
12. Jean (volunteers coordinator) is a major hustler of funds, good follow through
13. staff is cost conscious and has expenses under control

### Weaknesses

1. too much fluid money
2. need strong Board support in fund raising activitie
3. will also be a problem due to increasing competition from direct service organizations
4. too many little fund raising projects
5. too many little events
6. need a financial base (bank loan) - not wasting time raising pennies
7. too much reliance on "nickle and dime funding" - raffles, bake sales, etc..
8. funding procedures presently cause us to hit the giving parties too many times within a year
9. not enough funding to put SHO on sound financial basis

10. have not nurtured the elected officials lately for specific direct state support
11. need major payers
12. need for more major donors
13. no major gifts on the horizon
14. need to focus on major gifts/wills, etc.
15. need more funding from special gifts
16. perhaps one large project to raise money would eliminate need for the smaller ones that take up much time and energy
17. fund raising activities are not focused
18. lack of focus given over to effective major donor campaigns
19. requires more pro-active position in forging relationships cooperatively with other nonprofit agencies to assist in funding source leverage.

## **Organizational Structure**

### Strengths

1. high quality people
2. charismatic and patient leadership
3. Kathy Carland and Jean Stout
4. committed staff
5. hard working staff
6. staff extremely dedicated- willing to go the extra mile
7. excellent employees
8. high quality people on Advisory Council
9. good and willing Advisory Council
10. provides source of revenue
11. quality of people is excellent, volunteers, Board, Council
12. hard working, bright, committed group

### Weaknesses

1. need a more formal Board recruitment plan
2. each program needs a coordinator
3. need to define roles of staff, Board and Council in fundraising
4. need for review committee organization
5. need a clearly defined use of staff time
6. more staff needed
7. programs - too much for current staff
8. programs need to be driven by funding and staffing consideration
9. confusion as to role of Board and Council
10. Advisory Council needs direction
11. Define roles of Board and Council
12. Advisory Council needs revitalized role within SHO

13. Role of Advisory Council v. Board not clear
14. Role of Advisory Council needs clarification in by-laws
15. there needs to be satellite offices to insure presence throughout Washington County.
16. Board member recruitment needs organization
17. lack of effective staff job descriptions
18. staff time given over too frequently to hands on involvement rather than overseeing
19. staff roles have changed, need to update job descriptions
20. too much time spent in hands on service
21. too many committee meetings for output
22. board seems to have some difficulty following through with tasks
23. director forced to spend too much time on funding
24. too much to do for the limited staff
25. need another 1/2 time person
26. need more staff
27. organizational skills wasted on fund raising - spend more time on the mission
28. too much fund raising activity falls on the staff



## **Mission**

### Strengths

1. concept of volunteerism is well known and respected
2. supports volunteerism
3. even though our mission is not clear, we do so much for th size of our organization
4. we have flexibility to adapt to changing trends and requirements

### Weaknesses

1. will SHO grow indefinitely? will growth be mainly service to more frail?
2. SHO must develop three things; 1. a clear statement of its role, active programming or recruitment and training of volunteers, 2. a statement of limitations of services, and 3. a clearly defined statement of staff time use.
3. a formal mission statement needs to be made specific and global. Goals and objectives msut follow to clarify where SHO really should be going.
4. needs update - more definitive scope of market served and how served
5. too brief
6. needs to be more encompassing of what we do
7. not clear to Board and Council
8. we are hindered by lack of clarity, we need an agreed upon statement that is clearly understood and accepted by everyone
9. much too brief and vague
10. clear definition needed reagrding purpose, direction, etc. of SHO
11. name
12. our name leads others to believe we can help many others in many ways
13. need to define numbers of people who are eligible for SHO by age
14. no objective age mentioned
15. input from service providers on how they perceive our strengths and weaknesses
16. mission statement not reflective of constituent group or geographical boundaries.

## **Promotion**

### Strengths

1. SHO does well by its volunteers, but again needs to advertise its programs
2. American Power Conversion
3. Maybe an article on today's workshop in the Narragansett Times would help clarify our mission, etc
4. we get out picture in the paper often
5. regular mention in Narragansett Times aids in knowledge of SHO
6. other agencies know us partially because of Meals on Wheels and Bulk Mailing teams
7. we are overly concerned with promotion. The many programs we're involved in and the large number of volunteers do terrific promotion for us

### Weaknesses

1. general public sees SHO as a volunteer placement agency and therefore should be run by volunteers
2. confusion as to what SHO means
3. foster greater cooperation with all senior centers in Washington County to avoid duplication and/or appearance of competition
4. SHO needs to be kept in the public eye throughout all Washington County. The impression is that SHO concentrates in certain towns.
5. press releases are sporadic
6. board member recruiting. need high profile community leader for PR purposes
7. need active PR committee person
8. require more focus on developing effective rapport with politicians on a state level in particular to promote SHO
9. need a written promotional plan
10. it is not clear that our present promotional activities are giving us the best return for our money

11. publicize the fact that SHO serves youth, not just the elderly

## **Physical Plant**

### Strengths

1. convenient location
2. good location
3. physical plant is more than adequate
4. shared with other nonprofits which aids in communication
5. networking opportunities
6. allows for greater interaction with other nonprofits and URI
7. good potential for networking
8. easily accessible
9. user friendly
10. good communications equipment
11. availability of conference room and kitchen
12. copy machine available
13. fax machine
14. reasonable rent
15. adequate for 5 years
16. gives SHO a professional image
17. professional building
18. pleasant environment
19. great facility to meet with other parties

### Weaknesses

1. lack of expansion possibilities
2. need money for rent
3. lack of privacy in office
4. need office partitions
5. fixed monetary commitment

6. congested
7. more expensive than the congregational church (old office space)
8. need another computer
9. inconvenient location
10. no air on weekends

## **Programs**

### Strengths

1. programs reach many frail elderly
2. satisfied with our programs
3. programs have promotional value
4. cover many areas which would not be covered otherwise
5. diversity of program base
6. several SHO programs are proving to be very effective even if somewhat small in coverage
7. excellent variety of programs
8. need high profile for community PR
9. well liked in the community
10. services unduplicated
11. responsive to individuals

### Weaknesses

1. like to see more programs for health issues for seniors
2. expansion of old programs or establishing new ones are too funding driven
3. need to prioritize resource commitment and manage written plan
4. too broadly based, need focus
5. too diversified, need more focus

## **Other**

### Strengths

1. name
2. huge pool of great volunteers available and ready for whatever needs develop

### Weaknesses

1. board members don't really know what SHO and SHO staff is doing
2. lack clear goals about what is going to get done in a given year, tendency to flow along without critical evaluation.

## **APPENDIX 3-5**



## **EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENT ASSESSMENT**

### **Background Literature**

Approximately 35 percent of people over the age of sixty five choose to spend some of their leisure time doing volunteer work (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1987). Many of these volunteers participate in nationally organized senior volunteer programs. Nationally organized programs include the Foster Grandparent Program, Retired Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP), and Service Corps of Retired Executives (SCORE). These programs, and others like them, represent a wealth of experience and information that should be utilized by the community (Cull, 1974).

With people living longer and retiring at younger ages, large numbers of people are in their post-retirement years. Researchers and policy planners describe a vast reservoir of active, healthy, experienced, and educated retired persons whose productivity might be effectively tapped, on an unpaid basis (Fischer, L, 1991:183). In addition, the elderly are one of the fastest growing segments of the population. With individuals living past 80, and retiring at 65, they have 15 plus years of retirement (Duensing, 1988:33). During this time, many seek to fill their leisure time with useful activities. Volunteering in the community fits this role for many senior citizens.

Future decades promise to provide an abundance of healthy seniors with available leisure time to volunteer. As the "baby boomer" generation ages and strides in medical science continue to increase life expectancy there will be even more able seniors. The next decades also promise to include budget cuts for the nonprofit service sector organizations resulting in an increased need for senior volunteers.

Therefore, it is imperative that the services of the senior volunteers are utilized to the fullest extent. The seniors and their life experiences should be considered a great asset to any community and planning should be done to ensure that this asset is employed successfully.

As a result, Fischer and Schaffer (1993) recommend re-envisioning aging policies based on the following premise:

1. The productive potential of the older population constitutes an important social and economic resource.
2. It is a social and public responsibility to create opportunities for productive aging through volunteerism, paid employment, and entrepreneurship.
3. Although an older volunteer force cannot solve social problems, it can have a substantial and meaningful impact on social welfare.
4. It is the responsibility of a public-private partnership to invest in and support an older volunteer force. Lack of resources is often an obstacle to development of volunteers programs. To maximize the productive potential of our older population will require additional funding from both the public and private sectors.

## **Demographics**

The 1990 U.S. census indicated that there were 22,215 seniors (55+) living in Washington County, this is approximately 20 percent of the total Washington County population. At that time an additional 4544 residents were between the ages of 50 and 54, making them eligible for SHO volunteering today. In addition, over then next five years, approximately 6000 more residents will reach the age of 55. These numbers represent a wealth of current and future potential SHO volunteers.

The following table shows the growth in the senior population of Washington County in the past decades.

Age	1980 Population	1990 Population	% Change
50-54	4374	4544	3.74
55-59	4317	4207	(2.55)
60-64	3883	4500	15.89
65-69	3442	4390	27.54
70-74	2500	3491	39.64
75-79	1719	2702	57.18
80-84	1052	1637	55.61
85+	905	1288	42.32

Source: U.S. census

Minorities represent a small proportion of the seniors in Washington County. According to the 1990 census, 1.9 percent of those 55 and over classify themselves as a minority (nonwhite). This figure is even smaller than the percentage of minorities found in the total population of Washington County (3.4 percent).

### **Economic Climate**

The trend toward more and more organizations competing for less and less funding is likely to continue. Each year funds are harder and harder to come by. While this is a national problem, it is also amplified locally by Rhode Island's continued budget problems. In a forum held by the Department of Elderly Affairs, funding and program cuts are of great concern to the Department and to the seniors that these cuts affect.

## **Political Climate**

The recent election has returned the republican party to power in both the House and Senate. Traditionally, Republicans favor less government intervention and a smaller government role in programs. This fact coupled with their desire to decrease government spending will likely lead to less funding for nonprofit organizations and programs. It is also likely to lead to a greater need for SHO volunteers as nonprofit organizations look to fill staff vacancies with volunteers.

The new majority also hopes to pass a bill that raises the earning limit to \$30,000 (its is currently \$11,000) for those age 65-70 who get full Social Security benefits. This bill, if it passes, may lower the number of seniors who retire early, which in return may lower the amount of SHO volunteers.

In addition, the Department of Elderly Affairs in their State Plan on Aging, suggests that more elders get involved politically by lobbying and organizing on behalf of common concerns.

## **External Needs Assessment**

In May 1992 the SHO Advisory Council conducted an survey to assess the needs of the stations where the SHO volunteers work. A questionnaire was sent to every station that at that time had a Memorandum of Understanding with SHO.

Twenty seven (67.5%) of the stations responded to the questionnaire. The respondents indicated that about 249, approximately 12.5% of their volunteers, were SHO affiliated.

A large portion of the questionnaire was open ended questions. These qualitative questions provide a richness that is lost in quantitative data. Therefore, the below comments are a general consensus of SHOs overall ability.

"The SHO staff responds excellently to our requests, they are helpful, responsive and enthusiastic"

When asked what else SHO can do, some of the responses were:

Increase volunteer staff

More specific matching between volunteer and site

Provide on site training for volunteers

More follow up with volunteers

More skilled volunteers

Further enhance community awareness

When asked if SHO maintains contact with your organization, most stations stated that they did and that they called to discuss the volunteers. The stations considered this very valuable and good "PR".

Most of the stations agreed that in the next three to five years their needs for volunteers will most likely increase.

Some other comments mentioned by the respondents are listed below:

"SHO should consider using more volunteers as in house staff for their organization"

"SHO is a great Help"

"SHO has gone out of their way to accommodate our needs"

"SHO is a wonderful asset"

"SHO is undoubtedly the most effective at recruiting a volunteer to fill a specific need"

There were very few critical comments. The major criticisms that were stated were that SHO needs more volunteers, needs to provide better training for its volunteers, and needs to follow up on the lack of seniors who keep track of their volunteer hours.

Based on the survey findings Seniors Helping Others could better meet their needs by:

1. Increasing their pool of volunteers
2. Providing more extensive training to the volunteers - this can be accomplished by Seniors Helping Others alone or in conjunction with some of the organizations where the seniors volunteer.
3. Implementing a better way to keep track of volunteer hours - perhaps one of the seniors could be in charge of this.

It has been two years since this assessment was completed and SHO has attempted to address the critical issues identified by the stations. The following is an update on SHO response to those issues.

1. SHO has made numerous attempts to increase the pool of volunteers. The SHO staff has become more aggressive in recruiting new individuals by advertising in the newspaper, word of mouth, and attending local civic club meetings. As a result the pool of volunteers has increased and this increase is expected to continue.
2. SHO still does not fully address the issue of training. The organization is only responsible for training the Friendly Visitors. SHO leaves the training of other volunteers to the stations since each station has a different set of needs.
3. SHO has and will continue to search for ways for improving the recording keeping of hours. Jean Stout, the Executive Director, said that this is still a problem and that they have not come up with the proper vehicle for accurately reporting hours.

## References

Cull, John G. and Richard E. Hardy. 1974. *Volunteerism: An Emerging Profession*. Illinois: Charles C Thomas Publisher.

Duensing, Edward E. 1988. *America's Elderly: A Sourcebook*. N.J.: Center for Urban Policy Research.

Fischer, Lucy Rose, Daniel P. Mueller, and Philip W. Cooper. 1991. Older Volunteers: A Discussion of the Minnesota Senior Study. *The Gerontologist*. 32, 2: 183-194.

Fischer, Lucy Rose and Kay Banister Schaffer. 1993. *Older Volunteers: A Guide to Research and Practice*. California: Sage Publications.

## **APPENDIX 3-6**



	IDENTITIES		PROBLEMS / ISSUES	CONSIDERATIONS FOR ACTION
MISSION STATEMENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ELDERLY POPULATION GROWING; ACCORDINGLY DEMAND FOR SERVICES TO ELDERLY AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR ELDERLY TO SERVE, ARE GROWING</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• VOLUNTEERISM IS BROADLY ACCEPTED AS A COMMENDABLE EFFORT</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MISSION STATEMENT:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- NOT CLEAR</li> <li>- TOO BRIEF / VAGUE</li> <li>- NOT DEFINITIVE OF SERVED MARKET</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SHO IDENTITY MAY NOT BE CLEARLY UNDERSTOOD</li> <li>• REVISE MISSION STATEMENT (Go to recruit &amp; counsel missing stakeholders)</li> </ul>
ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• WHATEVER TALENT WE NEED IS AVAILABLE</li> <li>• WE HAVE SUFFICIENT FREEDOM TO STRUCTURE OUR ORGANIZATION TO MEET OUR NEEDS</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HIGH QUALITY MEMBERS</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• INSUFFICIENT RESOURCES               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- MANPOWER</li> <li>- EQUIPMENT</li> </ul> </li> <li>• ORGANIZATIONAL RELATIONSHIPS, RESPONSIBILITIES, AUTHORITIES, ARE NOT CLEARLY UNDERSTOOD</li> <li>• SPREAD TOO THIN GEOGRAPHICALLY IE MORE SATELLITES NEEDED</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS/COSTS OF COMPUTER ENHANCEMENTS OF OPERATIONS? (NOT JUST ANOTHER COMPUTER)</li> <li>• REVIEW COLLECTIVE TALENTS WE HAVE VS TALENTS WE NEED AND WHERE SHOULD THESE TALENTS RESIDE (Bd, Adv. Council, PAID STAFF, OPERATIONAL COMMITTEES)</li> <li>• SPECIFY MINIMUM / DESIRABLE FEATURES OF COMPUTER SYST.</li> <li>• LINK <sup>to</sup> other local agencies</li> </ul>
FUNDING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SHO'S MAJOR SOURCES OF FUNDING WILL CONTINUE TO BE GOVERNMENT GRANTS, MAJOR GIFTS, AND PRIVATE FUND GRANTS</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• COMPETENT FINANCE COMMITTEE / TREASURER</li> <li>• GOOD BASE OF "FRIENDS OF SHO"</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• TOO MANY "LITTLE" PROJECTS</li> <li>• NEED TO CREATE A FOCUS ON SEVERAL POTENTIAL MAJOR FUNDING SOURCES</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DEVELOP A STRATEGY TO SOLICIT SPECIFIC FUNDING               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- MAJOR GIFTS?</li> <li>- COLLABORATIVE EFFORT</li> <li>- GOVERNMENT?</li> <li>ETC</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
PROMOTION (CONTINUED NEXT PAGE)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• GOOD NETWORKING VIA PROGRAMS &amp; SHO VOLUNTEERS</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CONFUSION AS TO WHAT "SHO" MEANS</li> <li>• SPORATIC</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NEED FOR A PLAN - WHAT DO WE DO? - THRU WHAT MEDIA? - HOW FREQUENTLY? &amp; C</li> <li>• CONTINUED USE OF PRINT AND ELECTRONIC MEDIA TO "SELL" THE SHO MISSION AND MESSAGE TO THE GENERAL PUBLIC, SHO VOLUNTEERS, AND POLICY MAKERS</li> <li>• ATTEMPT TO NURTURE AND EXPAND SHO'S POLITICAL BASE THROUGH USE OF BOARD MEMBERS AND STAFF CONTACT WITH LOCAL &amp; STATE ELECTED OFFICIALS</li> </ul>

PROJECT	SITUATION / ASSUMPTIONS	STRENGTHS / OPPORTUNITIES	WEAKNESSES / RISKS	CRITICAL ISSUES	CONSIDERATIONS FOR ACTION
PROGRAMS		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PROMOTIONAL VALUE</li> <li>RESPONSIVE TO INDIVIDUAL NEEDS</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>MAY BE LIMITED BY FUNDING NEEDS</li> <li>TOO BROADLY BASED; TOO DIVERSIFIED - NEED FOCUS</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>HOW DO WE CREATE FOCUS</li> <li>HOW DO WE ASSESS PROMOTIONAL VALUE AND CAPITALIZE ON IT TO PROMOTE FUNDING / FOSTER GROWTH</li> </ul>	
PROMOTIONS (CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS PAGE)					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>HAVE STAFF CONSULT WITH A "PROFESSIONAL" IN THE MARKETING AREA TO ASSIST IN A PROMOTION PLAN FOR THE ORGANIZATION AND ITS VOLUNTEERS AND THE LARGER COMMUNITY. (MARKETING FACULTY OR STUDENT MAY HELP)</li> <li>"SHO" LOGO - NEED FOR REDSIGN?</li> </ul>

## **APPENDIX 3-7**

Area	A SITUATION/ASSUMPTIONS	B STRENGTHS/OPPORTUNITIES	C WEAKNESSES/RISKS	D CRITICAL ISSUES	E CONSIDERATIONS FOR ACTION
MISSION STATEMENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ELDERLY POPULATION GROWING; ACCORDINGLY DEMAND FOR SERVICES TO ELDERLY AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR ELDERLY TO SERVE, ARE GROWING</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• VOLUNTEERISM IS BROADLY ACCEPTED AS A COMMENDABLE EFFORT</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MISSION STATEMENTS:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- NOT CLEAR</li> <li>- TOO BRIEF/VALUE-</li> <li>- NOT DEFINITIVE OF SERVED MARKET</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SHO IDENTITY MAY NOT BE CLEARLY UNDERSTOOD</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• REVISE MISSION STATEMENT</li> </ul>
ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• WHATEVER TALENT WE NEED IS AVAILABLE</li> <li>• WE HAVE SUFFICIENT FREEDOM TO STRUCTURE OUR ORGANIZATION TO MEET OUR NEEDS</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HIGH QUALITY MEMBERS</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• INSUFFICIENT RESOURCES               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- MANPOWER</li> <li>- EQUIPMENT</li> </ul> </li> <li>• ORGANIZATIONAL RELATIONSHIPS, RESPONSIBILITIES, AUTHORITIES, ARE NOT CLEARLY UNDERSTOOD</li> <li>• SPREAD TOO THIN GEOGRAPHICALLY IE MORE SATELLITES NEEDED</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ORGANIZATION STRUCTURE NEEDS REVIEW AND CLEARER DEFINITION OF FUNCTIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES (NOT JUST POSITION DESCRIPTIONS)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• REVIEW COLLECTIVE TALENTS WE HAVE VS TALENTS WE NEED AND WHERE SHOULD THESE TALENTS RESIDE (BJ, ADV. COMM. PAID STAFF, OPERATIONAL COMMITTEES)</li> <li>• REVIEW FUNCTIONAL RELATIONS AND ORG. STRUCTURE, IMPROVE AND SIMPLIFY COMMUNICATIONS</li> </ul>
FUNDING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SHO'S MAJOR SOURCES OF FUNDING WILL CONTINUE TO BE GOVERNMENT GRANTS, MAJOR GIFTS, AND PRIVATE FUND GRANTS OF SHO</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• COMPETENT FINANCE COMMITTEE/TREASURER</li> <li>• GOOD BACK OF "FRIENDS OF SHO"</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• TOO MANY "LITTLE" PROJECTS</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SHO IS UNDERFUNDED AND IS TOO DEPENDENT ON MISCELLANEOUS FUND RAISING EVENTS DEMANDING MUCH ORGANIZING EFFORT</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DEVELOP A STRATEGY TO SOLICIT SPECIFIC FUNDING - MAJOR GIFTS?</li> <li>- COLLABORATIVE EFFORT</li> <li>- GUARANTEE?</li> <li>- ETC</li> <li>• CLARIFY ORGANIZATIONAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR FUNDING</li> </ul>